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THE APOSTLESHIP OF SUFFERING



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THE  
APOSTLESHIP OF SUFFERING

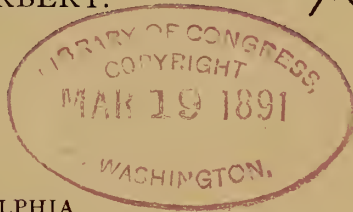
BY ✓  
FATHER JOHN LYONNARD,  
OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.

*In Cruce salus.*

"In the Cross is salvation."

REVISED

WITH ADDITIONAL MATTER AFTER THE AUTHOR'S FINAL  
EDITION, FROM THE TRANSLATION BY  
LADY HERBERT.



PHILADELPHIA  
MESSENGER OF THE SACRED HEART  
114 South Third Street

1890

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BY REV. R. S. DEWEY, S. J.

THE author of the present treatise designed it as a companion book to *The Apostleship of Prayer* by Father Ramière. He lived to see the latter work become the doctrinal foundation of a wellnigh universal League of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The nature of the ideas which he felt himself called to set before the Christians of a self-indulgent age has naturally prevented his own work from having a like success. Providence also seems to point out that his high thoughts on the Divine Mission and Apostolic Uses of Suffering are to be brought home to Christian hearts in that association which unites so many with the Heart of Jesus Pleading and Agonizing for men. In fact, his book is little more than a development of a part of that daily *Morning Offering* which is the essential bond of union of the Associates of the Holy League. The many millions of Christians who have embraced the Apostleship of Prayer in all parts of the world bind themselves to offer daily for the "Intentions" and desires of the Divine Heart, through the Heart of Mary Immacu-

late, "all their prayers, works, and *sufferings*." Accordingly, before his death in 1887, Father Lyonard bequeathed his book to the General Direction of the Apostleship of Prayer.

This Holy League, as is well known, has for its periodical organ the *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, published in so many various languages. The American *Messenger* now gives, in its *Quarterly Sacred Heart Library*, this final translation of *The Apostleship of Suffering*, revised according to the authorized edition of the original published by the Director General of the Apostleship of Prayer. For this purpose Lady Herbert, with the greatest kindness, has allowed the use of her own excellent version, made from the first edition as long ago as 1870 and now out of print. To this the new chapters, written by the author for his last edition, have been added, with other slight changes in accordance with the present scope of the work. It is hoped that the holy desires of Father Lyonard may thus be more nearly fulfilled.

So far back as 1847, when the League of the Sacred Heart was but just beginning, Father Lyonard—not yet a priest—made a religious promise—"under penalty of venial sin, to ask from God, every day, to *suffer* in order that the new Association of the *Apostleship of Prayer* may be firmly established." His ardent and self-sacrificing zeal doubtless helped

to win special graces from God in favor of the new Association, then struggling for existence. It also brings to mind a curious and edifying fact that well illustrates the guiding providence of the Holy Spirit over a work destined to take so prominent a part in the Church's devotion.

Christians have always recognized that prayer is an *apostolic* weapon, that is, prayer is available for the salvation of souls by drawing down the needed grace from God ; and this power of prayer is multiplied many times over by the union of many praying hearts in the same humble and confident demand. In 1844, a venerable director of future *apostles of the word* was inspired to associate them, during their period of waiting, in the *Apostleship of Prayer*. This was the late venerated Father Xavier Gautrelet, then Spiritual Father of the Jesuit Scholastics in Vals. This seminary united together, for the study of theology in immediate preparation for the priesthood, students from widely separated parts of the world. It was the 3d of December—the feast of St. Francis Xavier who, more nearly than any other Christian missionary from the earliest ages until now, has realized in himself the character of Christ's first Apostles. In his exhortation Father Gautrelet laid down the fundamental principle of the Apostleship of Prayer ; and from that day its practice was begun in the community.

Among the chosen youth that listened to his

words of zeal and devotion there were three destined to take up the idea, which he cast out as seed by the wayside, and help to make it fruitful beyond all possible expectation.

The first was Father Henry Ramière, who was to make the Apostleship the basis of a universal League of Christian hearts with the Heart of Jesus praying and pleading for the Church and the salvation of souls. He was to give it a final organization, with lay *Promoters* keeping alive and propagating ever more and more its *Three Degrees* of Christian devotion; and he was to furnish it, for continued and safe direction, with a chain of official bulletins reaching round the world in the various but united *Messengers of the Sacred Heart*.

The second was Father Drevon, who gave the first definite impulse to the great pilgrimages to Paray—the sanctuary of all devotion to the Sacred Heart. His life-work, too, was to be united with the many spiritual movements of our day which have taken a lasting form and life in the Holy League. The *Communion of Reparation*, which he had founded in the Church, had already been recognized as the *Third Degree* of the *Apostleship of Prayer* when, at his death and in accordance with his wish, the Head of the Church finally associated its Direction with the General Direction of the League of the Sacred Heart.

The third of these holy souls—“*burning and*

*giving light*”—was the author of the present treatise on the *Apostleship of Suffering*. As has been said, the offering of our daily sufferings, in union with the Pleading and Agonizing Heart of Jesus, has always been an essential part of the *Apostleship of Prayer*; and thus, with his precious book left as a legacy to the Holy League, Father Lyonnard saw at his death his own life-work made one with that which had so stirred the hearts of himself and his companions almost half a century before.

R. S. DEWEY, S. J.

*Feast of St. Mary ad Nives, 5 August, 1890.*

*I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh for His Body, which is the Church.*

Colossians, i. 24.



## TO THE READER.

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Have you met with a book full of instruction and piety published under the title of "*The Apostleship of Prayer*"? If the providence of God has not already placed this little work in your hands, hasten to obtain it without delay. You could not read anything which would be of greater benefit to your soul. Between the work just mentioned and that which we are now about to offer to your perusal, there exists a very intimate connection, and even a kind of relationship. We may venture to say that you can hardly derive full profit from the one without having studied and perfectly comprehended the teaching of the other. A few words of explanation will suffice to put this idea in the clearest possible light. The tabernacle or temple which was raised by Moses to the glory of the Most High God, contained two altars. The first stood opposite the porch of the temple, and was called the *altar of holocausts*. Here the victims were slaughtered, the rams and the heifers; here was shed the blood of the bulls. The second altar arose majestically within the temple itself, occupying the place of honor opposite the Holy of Holies; this was the *altar of incense*.

Every day at certain hours the Priests of the Lord came to burn sweet incense upon this altar, and its rich perfume ascended as an odor of sweetness to the throne of the eternal God. But as if this homage were in itself insufficient or even powerless to effect its object, Aaron, the High Priest, advanced, once every year, in all the pomp of his priestly office to the altar of incense, carrying in his hands a vessel full of blood, taken from the altar of holocausts, and this blood he poured upon each of the four corners of the altar, as a sacred anointing. In like manner does the Sovereign Judge of the world, the God of supreme power and majesty, require man, His reasonable creature, to render Him due honor by offering Him a joint sacrifice of those two things which at first sight appear to be most completely opposed. to each other, *blood* and *incense*; a requisition of deep symbolic meaning, containing instruction of the most exalted kind.

To enable us to comprehend more clearly this symbolic ceremony of the Old Law, we may listen with advantage to the beautiful commentary of St. Gregory: "Know," says that great Pope, "that in the temple of your soul there are two altars, the Altar of *Holocausts* and the Altar of *Incense*. You will not be permitted to offer upon the one the incense of your prayers until you have shed upon the other the blood of a victim,—that is to say, until you have immolated your own passions. No; you will

not be permitted to enter into that sanctuary until by a full and suitable expiation you have found grace in the eyes of the Lord. The incense of your prayers will not ascend to Him as a perfume of sweet odor until you have subjected your will and your desires to God by an act of generous self-sacrifice." *To suffer and to pray*, with feelings of humility, confidence, and love, in union with Jesus Christ ; such is the sacrifice which is especially acceptable to the Lord ; such is the most certain and efficacious means of assuring our own salvation, and of contributing to the salvation of others. And now, pious reader, you perceive the intimate connection which exists between the *Apostleship of Prayer* and the *Apostleship of Suffering*. Prayer and Suffering are the two conditions of the supernatural life. If we separate the one from the other, especially in the exercise of our apostolical zeal, we run the risk of missing our mark entirely. The traveller requires two feet to walk upon ; in like manner the faithful Christian, who desires to take an active part in the great work of the salvation of souls, cannot take a single step without these two necessary supports, *Suffering* and *Prayer*.

Behold, then, zealous Christians, who love the souls of men, which Jesus loved so tenderly, and for which He shed His Blood, behold a fresh stimulus to your zeal. An author who advocates one of the most holy undertakings of the present day, has

said to you : *“Pray for the souls of men ; your prayer, united to that of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, will save them.”* And in our turn, also, we lift up our feeble voice throughout this vast arena called “the world,” in which so many poor children of Adam are still combating the enemy of all good, and we say to you : *“Suffer for the souls of men : your sufferings, united to those of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus, will avail to save them.”*

Jesus, the crucified One, the humble Son of Mary, is now, as He ever was, the sole Mediator between God and men. If we and our contemporaries are to be saved (and saved we shall be if we are truly humble), we shall owe our salvation solely to Jesus Christ crucified, and to the victims whom He condescends to associate with Himself in His Sacrifice. “If the great human tragedy be not already coming to an end,” writes a Catholic author of our own day ; “if, after this triumph and this apostasy be ended, there still remains a future for this world of ours ; the world will be saved hereafter in no other way than it was saved at the beginning ; it will be saved because Christ has found martyrs to follow in His steps. Yet once again will liberty descend from Calvary, bleeding and immortal ; yet once again will it begin to implant in the hearts of men those eternal truths which alone have power to free them from servitude to man, as being alone powerful to make them children and servants of

God.” In carrying out the great work of man’s redemption, God does not follow two diverse plans. From all eternity He has resolved to save the world by the Cross ; and to the very last day of the world’s existence He will steadily adhere to the same immutable design. The prayer and the blood-shedding of Jesus in the Garden of Olives and upon Calvary rescued the whole world from the abyss of error and corruption in which it was then buried. The prayers and blood of the Martyrs of the three first centuries, united to the prayers and Blood of Jesus, the God-Man, completed that great work of regeneration. Let no man deceive himself ; this is still true : the prayer and blood-shedding of Jesus in the Garden of Olives and upon the Cross of Calvary can alone arrest the modern world upon the verge of the same abyss, into which the men of the present day are endeavoring to cast it, by bringing it back to the Paganism of former times. And the prayers and sufferings of Christians, the living members of Jesus Christ, will contribute in the most efficacious manner toward this great work of preservation and deliverance. As a pious writer has well observed : “ The world is upheld by the merits of the Saints,” and this remark is peculiarly applicable to the times in which we live. Yes, after Jesus, it is through the sufferings and prayers of the Saints—that is to say, of fervent Catholics—that the salvation of the present generation will arise.



However great may be the contempt with which this ungrateful world regards them, how bitter soever the hatred with which it pursues their steps, let them be well assured that its fate is in their hands. But for the charitable intervention of those faithful disciples of Christ who pray and suffer continually to avert the wrath of God from this wicked generation, it would long ago have endured the severest penalties of His Heavenly vengeance, or (worse than any punishment which could be inflicted) it would have been ruthlessly given up to its own reprobate sense. But the prayers and self-sacrifice of the Saints have caused God to withhold His hand, which was uplifted always ready to descend heavily upon it; and this is the true reason why, in the midst of all those crimes and abominations which we daily witness, the infinite love of our Father in Heaven still bears with man, and continues to load him with His benefits. May His most holy Name be for ever blessed and praised !

For yourself, pious reader, you see as plainly as we can see them, the glaring evils of the present day. You surely are not willing to remain idle and inactive amidst so many miseries which your zeal might remedy; in the presence of so much good which your efforts might bring about. We feel convinced that when you have read this little book, you will no longer hesitate to take part in the peaceful crusade which is here proposed to you. The principal weapon of this holy war, together with *prayer*, is

*suffering*, borne courageously in union with our Lord Jesus Christ ; and offered to obtain from the infinite mercy of God the cessation of those calamities with which our Holy Mother the Church is afflicted, and the destruction of those causes of ruin and scandal which are the means of every day precipitating such numbers of souls into eternal torments. Yes, beloved reader, in proportion to the number of those *apostles* of *prayer* and *suffering* who willingly devote themselves to suffer and pray for the needs of this guilty world, will be the certainty of its return to God, and consequently of its attaining eternal salvation. Let this thought kindle fresh courage and zeal in your hearts during your study of this little work, which we offer with deep humility as an act of homage to the Agonizing Heart of Jesus, and to the Compassionate Heart of Mary. May those loving Hearts, those Victims of charity and sorrow, accept and bless our humble undertaking, and cause it to bring forth, a hundredfold, fruits of salvation in time and in eternity !





First Part.

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THE DIVINE MISSION OF SUFFERING.



# THE APOSTLESHIP OF SUFFERING.

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## CHAPTER I.

Suffering the inevitable condition of man upon earth.

A holy writer has left us these words in a book which can never be too deeply studied !\* Go where you will, seek what you will, dispose and order all things according to your will, and you must ever find something to suffer—you must always find the Cross. Suffering, the inseparable companion of your mortal life, follows you with unwearying assiduity. Do not try to escape from it by hasty and sudden flight ; you will find no place of refuge where you will not carry your Cross with you. It is a part of your very existence. You carry the Cross in your members, the seat of all your pains ; you carry it in your soul, the doors of which stand open to all kinds of sorrow. Suffering is your guest every hour, every moment of the day : the Cross is to you another self.

If this description seems to you to be exaggerated, look into your own heart, and look around

\* Imitation of Jesus Christ.

you. Recall to remembrance your own past ; listen to your own sighs ; question the history of your former life, and complete the picture from the life of others ; for as regards sorrow your history is more or less the history of all other men. Let me suppose that you are a simple Christian living in the world. Is it not the case that there are very few pages in the journal of your life in which there does not appear some one of those expressions which, with countless shades of diversity, all signify one single thing—*Suffering*? Let us take a rapid glance back at some of those pages which have been too soon forgotten. To pass over the tears shed over your cradle, and during your childhood, let us, if you will, hurry on at once to the days of your youth and riper age. As to old age, the period of infirmity and decline, we know already that it is nought but labor and sorrow. The Holy Spirit has Himself declared this truth, and the daily experience of our lives confirms it: *Labor et dolor*. Take and read, then, that book of past experience, which contains so many salutary lessons. *Tolle, lege*.

Here, then, is the page belonging to the time of your earliest education ; a time passed in alternate joy and sorrow : boisterous amusement, perhaps, but severe privations. We all acquire the first elements of science at the cost of painful and daily recurring sacrifices. The premature death possibly of a tender mother leaves us half-orphaned, and we shed bitter

tears over her untimely grave. People say: "Poor child, still so young, and to have already suffered so much!" Let us proceed. The page which follows will, we trust, be less mournful. The sweet day of our First Communion. The joy of Heaven came down on our soul on that day together with our God. Why, alas! must joy such as this be still mingled with bitterness? The absence of a beloved mother from the holy Table has perhaps filled our souls with grief; or our father is totally indifferent to religion, and refuses to accompany us. What, even so bright a day as this may not pass without a cloud? And yet in all our life we may never again enjoy a day of such pure and unclouded happiness. We now approach the stormy period of youth: we unfortunately fix our affections on some dangerous friends. They lead us away with them into a course of dissipation and extravagance. Henceforth our life resembles that of the Prodigal Son. We pass through the various phases of his sad and unprofitable existence. The same giddy thoughtlessness, the same thirst for pleasure, the same forgetfulness of duty, the same delusive dreams, the same deceptions, the same distress, and, above all, the same remorse. In moments of silence and solitude, how does the remembrance of our mother, and of all her wise and pious advice, wring our inmost souls with unspeakable anguish! At length, however, this tender remembrance, assisted by the grace of God,

avails to bring us back to the paths of peace and holiness. We lay down at the feet of the minister of God the heavy burthen of our sins, and with the words of holy absolution the peace of Heaven re-enters our soul. But in order to preserve it, we must do violence to our own inclinations, and wage courageously a daily warfare against the enemies of our soul. Thus, then, our youth is passed amidst tempests, combats, frequent falls, and some victories dearly bought.

I see how it is. You have suffered. Still, how many others have been far more severely tried ! You have never wanted bread, or shelter, or clothing ; and how many poor orphans have been deprived of all these things ? You have always enjoyed good health ; and how many of the companions of your childhood, tender plants which withered before their bloom, languish under the weight of premature infirmities ? When you fell into sin, you rose again ; thanks to the infinite mercy of God, and to the prayers of your good Mother who is in Heaven. How many others have gone further than you have done in the paths of iniquity ? how many have fallen from one depth of wickedness to another, and are still dragging about with them the heavy chain of sin and remorse ? Bless then the Lord. And now, having begun the history of your lives, let us follow it to the end.

No sooner are we settled in the world than fam-

ily cares and worldly business absorb our time and our thoughts. Fortune favors us for a period, but ere long her fickle breezes fail us, and soon among our numerous friends, and even relatives, enmity and ingratitude are found. However, the state of our affairs improves by degrees. The friends who had fled from us in the time of adversity now return. We watch the rapid growth of our beloved children, and rejoice when we think that they will one day be the support of our old age. Like wearied travellers, we pause awhile to take breath in the midst of our long and painful journey. But this repose is of short duration. Death comes a second time to turn into anguish our innocent happiness. In the course of a few years our aged father, or beloved spouse, or one of our children, is carried to the tomb; and as if the cup of grief were not yet full, one of our two remaining sons destroys our peace, and wrings our heart by his licentious conduct, and the disrespect he shows to his parent. Amidst this succession of misfortunes, we begin to feel and understand that true repose is to be found in God alone, and in the accomplishment of His holy will.

So then it was only after you had learned to accept the Cross with resignation that you succeeded in feeling any happiness in this world, where happiness is so rare. Yes, after so much sorrow, God was pleased to grant you that favor. Blessed for ever be His Holy Name! Such, then, has been your life.



It has been very stormy. Yes! but I attribute these storms to my numerous sins. Had I been more faithful, I should assuredly have been more happy. You are quite right. You would at least have avoided the sharp trial of remorse. Still you must not imagine that any insurmountable barrier would in that case have been raised between you and sorrow; only you would then have suffered with more courage. You would have found greater consolation, and have derived more fruit and gained more merits from your troubles. But suffering would still have been your portion. The necessity under which we labor of doing violence to ourselves in the steadfast pursuit of holiness, is in itself a sacrifice. The most sacred professions, the most retired cloister, are no protection against the Cross. And souls of the highest courage and virtue seek these abodes only to meet their Cross the more certainly. They find it there, indeed, with all its charms, but also with all the rigors of its holy severity; in the practice of their rule, in the observance of their vows—more especially of the vow of obedience, which crushes their own will twenty times a day; so that there is no condition in which we can possibly place ourselves to which we may not with good reason apply those words of St. Augustine: “Our present life is a weary pilgrimage—fugitive, uncertain, wearisome; it exposes us to the contagion of every vice and of every crime, and entails upon us every kind of misery and misfortune.



It ought not to be called Life, but Death.' And, in fact, man dies every instant. What is a life distracted by passions, exhausted by griefs?—a life which a breath can poison, which pleasures destroy, which sorrow consumes, and misfortunes abridge? Riches puff up and intoxicate, while poverty degrades us; youth fills us with pride and self-sufficiency, while old age bows us under the weight of countless infirmities; sickness breaks us down, and sadness utterly overwhelms us. And all these miseries are succeeded by the implacable and inevitable enemy, Death!

It will be fitting here, in order to complete this sad picture of human grief, that we should speak of the trials through which it is the pleasure of our Lord to cause His most faithful servants to pass. We reserve the discussion of this interesting subject to one of the following Chapters. For the present, we shall only sum up by saying that if you have already suffered much, you have in this respect only shared the common destiny of man. Some may have encountered fewer thorns, fewer trials on their path to Heaven; but it is also true that many have met with far more than you have met with. All must drink their share of the cup of sorrow, either willingly or unwillingly. Every one of us must put his lips to it, and take long draughts of the bitter but salutary waters of the Cross. To be children of Adam, and to suffer, are things inseparable here

below. And let us not fail to add, for our common consolation, that if this inevitable suffering be borne in a truly resigned and Christian spirit, it will become to us a fertile source of the highest spiritual benefit.

## CHAPTER II.

Suffering a very efficacious means by which man is enabled to attain the chief end of his being: that is to say, to save his soul.

In reading the preceding Chapter, the reader will not have misunderstood our intention. He must not suppose that because we have made choice of a simple Christian living in the world as our example of suffering, we on that account meant to address one class only of persons. If it were so, our meaning has been misapprehended, and we are to blame for having caused the error. In putting forward the instance of any particular individual as an instance of sorrow or suffering, our wish was to illustrate it from your own case, except the wanderings of the Prodigal Son, from which, by God's mercy, our readers have been withheld.

Even if we were Angels upon earth — “an Angel clothed with mortal flesh” — as was said of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, we should still be subject to suffering and pain, due to us as to all other children of Adam. Yes, whoever you are, to what condition soever you belong, whether you dwell in a palace or in the cloister's humblest cell, you must apply to yourself, with some few personal modifications, the whole of the preceding description: for suffering is

the inevitable lot of every man; it mingles with his existence like the very air he breathes. But let me now point out to you another consideration which will give you great encouragement amidst the evils which are inseparable from our mortal state: this suffering which is so bitter to your taste, so agonizing to your heart, so humiliating to your feelings, is, nevertheless, one of the most efficacious means of enabling you to attain, with the help of God, to the great aim and object of your life—your last end; that is to say, your eternal salvation.

By suffering we understand whatever sad and painful events are appointed unto man to endure in the course of his mortal life. Thus illness, reverse of fortune, loss of property and of relations, the unfaithfulness of friends, domestic griefs, public calamities and national visitations, persecutions, the difficulties inseparable from the pursuit of virtue, the practice of Christian mortification, desolation, sadness, our last agony, our death: in a word, all those troubles which wring so many deep sighs from the heart of man, and such bitter tears from his eyes,—this is what we call *suffering*.

It is of these many trials and sufferings that we say: They are the most efficacious means by which, in the present order of God's providence, in and through the merits of Jesus Christ, fallen man can be raised from his degraded state, and restored to the path of eternal salvation.

For the full comprehension of this consoling truth it will be sufficient to observe that suffering is the great and chosen *means of expiation*, and it is through *expiation* alone that fallen man can be restored to a state of favor with his God.

Ever since the fall of Adam, our first Father, a new and mysterious necessity has disclosed itself in the human race—the necessity of expiation. From that first and fatal sin, which was the origin of all our misfortunes, the whole of mankind have ever looked upon themselves as being in the position of a great criminal, and have instinctively felt the necessity of appeasing the wrath of God by means of sacrifice. From this cause has arisen the universal custom, found even amongst barbarous nations, of immolating victims, and placing sacrifice in the first rank amongst their religious rites. Doubtless, in the application of this craving, which naturally springs up in the heart of fallen man, many fearful errors have arisen. Savage nations, giving the most sanguinary interpretation to the principle, have immolated human victims, and sought to appease the anger of the Supreme Being by the most revolting cruelties. But in spite of the bloody character of these barbarous ceremonies, they plainly and evidently attest the firm faith of all nations in the expiatory virtue of the shedding of blood. They all render in this respect unconscious testimony to the words of St. Paul, who in due time was to declare to all the people of

the earth, while pointing to the God-Man crucified upon Mount Calvary, "*There is no remission of sin for you if no blood be shed for you.*" *Sine sanguinis effusione, non fit remissio* (Heb., ix. 22).

But let us penetrate to the depths of this great mystery; let us ask ourselves what can have been the reason of this instinct of all nations, and of these words of the great Apostle. Let us inquire into the foundation of that universal conviction which attributes a power of perfect expiation of sins to the act of blood-shedding, and we shall find the explanation to be as follows: That as blood is the material source and principle of life in man, to shed our blood is *to give our life*. To give our life is to make the greatest sacrifice of which a man is capable. Our Lord Himself declared: "*Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*" *Majorem hac dilectionem nemo habet, ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis* (John, xv. 13).

But the outrage which man has committed against the Divine Majesty is so great, that to expiate it worthily he must have recourse to the greatest of all sacrifices, to the sacrifice of his own blood, and, consequently, to that of life itself. But after the fall of man his blood became worthless. It was now corrupted in its very origin, like a river springing from a poisoned source. Such a sacrifice cannot be acceptable to the God of infinite purity. Before such an offering could be acceptable to God, it was



necessary that by a previous operation, the secret of which was held by Him alone, this blood should be purified from its ancient stain, and restored to its pristine purity. This marvellous operation, this mystery of Divine Grace, into the depths of which men and Angels in vain desire to look, has been accomplished for us by the Word of God, the Only Begotten of the Father, Who united Himself hypostatically to our nature, by taking upon Him our flesh and our blood in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, assuming a body without spot or stain, a blood purer and more limpid than the morning dew, rosy and bright as the rays of the noonday sun.

Such is the Blood which God accepts in sacrifice as the price of our Redemption. And on the condition of the expiatory sacrifice of this precious Blood of Christ, God pardoned the guilt of man; and man, through the infinite virtue of that precious Blood-shedding, was in turn enabled to present himself to God, and to offer Him his own blood, in the certainty of a gracious reception. Hence from this time forward the blood of the man-sinner being purified by the blood of the Man-God, is capable of being offered to the Almighty as a sacrifice of expiation; and God, Who loves His Son with an infinite love, in beholding the Divine Blood of that dear Son mingled with the blood of fallen man, forgives the sinner in virtue of the merits of the Blood of His own Son, shed for us upon the Cross.

Let us now make a particular application of this consolatory doctrine to our present subject. Since it is certain that the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, shed upon the Cross of Calvary, is the sole expiatory sacrifice which can be pleasing to the Father, it follows that the personal expiations of fallen man can be agreeable to God only in so far as they are united to the expiation made by the Son of God, and thus are raised, in virtue of that union, to a divine dignity and value.

It is undoubtedly true that by the shedding of His own Blood our Lord Jesus Christ made full and sufficient expiation for the sins of all men; but it is His will that the particular expiation of each one of us should be united to His own, in order thus to make application of its virtue. If then you desire to participate in the divine efficacy and merits of the great Sacrifice consummated upon the Cross of Calvary, unite your expiation with that made by Jesus; that is to say, mingle your own blood with the expiatory Blood of Jesus; for *without shedding of blood there is no remission*, either for our own sins, or for those of others.

Is it necessary, then, you will ask, in order to participate in the virtue of the Blood of the Son of God, that fallen man should also shed his own blood? Assuredly, I answer, if the Divine Mediator had seen fit to render this condition obligatory upon us, no one could have questioned its propriety. He had a



right to impose it; but commonly He is willing to accept a less terrible sacrifice. However, we do not hesitate to affirm that in a certain manner He does demand, and does require of us, an offering of blood. But again you ask, "What blood does God require? Is it the blood which flows in our veins?" In reply, I would say that every Christian must be prepared to shed his blood in defence of his faith, and would be guilty of the crime of apostasy if, when the occasion arose, he should refuse to pay the tribute of his heart's blood to his Master and his King. Nevertheless, we repeat that God does not ordinarily exact this greatest of all sacrifices. Listen to the words of St. Bernard; he will supply you with the key to this enigma: *Est martyrii genus, est quædam effusio sanguinis in quotidiana corporis afflictione.* The practice of penance, from which no man can be entirely dispensed, the daily pains and afflictions which we suffer in our bodies, and we may add also in our souls; all these are a species of martyrdom, a kind of shedding of blood. This is the martyrdom that God requires of you; this is the effusion of blood that He demands of your soul. Do penance, bear with patience and fortitude the labor and fatigue to which your body is exposed, as well as the trials and afflictions which may come upon your soul, and then you are truly shedding your blood, you are making expiation for your own sins, and you may even make expiation for the sins of others also. And, surely,

not in outward bodily suffering alone, but far more in the interior trials and pangs of the heart, is the *true blood-shedding*. You are sorrowful ; death, cruel death, comes to make a gulf between you and all around. Well, this is a bleeding wound cut in your heart ; through this wound the blood of your soul pours forth in copious streams. We speak thus in common conversation, and our usual forms of speech bear testimony to a great truth. We say of a poor mother who has lost her only and beloved son by the remorseless hand of death, “How her heart must bleed !” Let us then repeat with St. Bernard, giving to his thought all the amplification of which it is susceptible : “Yes, bodily and spiritual afflictions are a kind of martyrdom, a form of shedding of blood.” *Est martyrii genus, est quædam effusio sanguinis in quotidiana corporis afflictione*. In union with the Blood of expiation shed by Jesus Christ Himself, that mysterious blood which flows from every wound made by grief in the Christian heart, partakes largely of the expiatory virtue of the Victim of Calvary ; and therefore the tears of penance, so well called by a holy person *the blood of the soul*, can efficaciously expiate and repair the worst sins and prodigalities of a guilty life.

David was guilty of a great crime. God in His anger required him to make a solemn reparation. He commanded the Prophet Nathan to seek out the King, and to say to him in His Name, with holy

daring: "Prince, thou art the guilty man (*Tu es ille vir*), and therefore the wrath of God is about to fall upon thee." David bowed his crowned head in lowly submission to the sentence pronounced by the messenger of God. Contrite and humble, he repented in dust and ashes, and when the wrath of God fell upon him, when the Prophet's words were fulfilled by the entrance of death into his house, and by the loss of his most cherished earthly treasure, then the holy King, with tears of bitter sorrow streaming from his eyes, smote his breast, and cried in true repentance, "Lord, I have sinned!" *Peccavi*. You know the end of this severe trial. The Lord, infinitely merciful, forgave the sinner, and continued to load the repentant King with fresh marks of His mercy and favor.

You see, then, that there is in affliction, even in that which is the just punishment of sin, provided it be endured with patience and resignation, a salutary virtue of expiation; and that it is, in consequence, a most efficacious instrument for enabling man to attain his last end, which is eternal salvation.

And here, reader, let us unite in admiring the wondrous mercy and loving-kindness of Almighty God as it is shown to man in the chastisements inflicted upon him. "It is the will of God," says St. Augustine, "that we should be overwhelmed with afflictions, that we should become a mark for every kind of insult, humiliation, and contempt

which the world can lay upon us, in order that we may wean ourselves entirely from all worldly affections, and withdraw our hearts from the love of all created things, and thus raise them by holy desires to the search after that heavenly rest which can never be found in this mortal life.”

Since, then, the providence of God has sent you sorrows and tribulations, it is now that He is busying Himself specially about your happiness; now is His chosen time for teaching you by the eloquent voice of suffering, and saying to you, *Sursum corda*. “Lift up your hearts. And since earth can henceforth be nothing to you but a path of trial and sorrow, raise your thoughts and affections above earthly things. Contemplate that heavenly region in which is My abode. There alone can your desires be satisfied.”

This is the only way of regarding suffering which is worthy of a Christian and of a disciple of Jesus Crucified. “The peculiar characteristic of the Gospel dispensation,” observes Bossuet, “is the necessity of bearing the Cross. The Cross is the true trial of faith, the only sure foundation of our hope, the perfection of charity; in a word, it is the path to Heaven. Jesus Christ died upon the Cross; He bore His Cross all His life long; it is by the way of the Cross He bids us follow Him, and He offers us eternal life on this condition alone. The first person to whom He gave a particular promise of the rest of the future life was His companion on

the Cross ; He said to him : ‘ This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.’ When Jesus Christ was nailed to the Cross, the veil of the Sanctuary was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and Heaven was opened to holy souls. When He had endured the Cross, and all the terrors of His sufferings and execution, He appeared to His Apostles, all glorious and triumphant over death, to teach them that it was by the Cross alone that He was to enter into glory, and that no other path to Heaven but this is open to His children. There is then great truth in the words of St. Cyprian, ‘ Sufferings are the wings with which I take my flight to Heaven.’ ”

We will close this Chapter with the following encouraging words of St. John Chrysostom : “ To comfort those unhappy souls who complain of the trials which afflict them, and who have neither the courage nor the sense to endure them well, the Apostle St. Paul says, ‘ *This light affliction, which is but for a moment*, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.’ And the meaning of this,” adds the eloquent interpreter, “ is as follows : ‘ Affliction is a fountain of blessing to us in our mortal state. It strengthens our souls, and causes them to increase in wisdom ; and it procures for us advantages in the future which are far above any reward justly due to our labors ;—it will recompense us a hundredfold for all our combats and fatigues.’ ”

## CHAPTER III.

How a Christian is raised by Jesus Christ to a Participation  
in the Divine Nature, or Deification of the  
Christian by Jesus Christ.

As it is needful, in order to attain the Apostolic end which we propose to ourselves in this work, to display in their strongest colors the value and reward of suffering, we consider it advisable to look still deeper into fundamental principles, and to demonstrate by solid proofs the divine character, and consequently the divine fecundity, of Christian suffering, in the order of saving souls.

For this purpose it is indispensable that we should establish, in the first place, the divine character of the Christian who is the subject of the suffering of which we speak. And, indeed, it is more than ever necessary in the days in which we live (when the most sacred truths of religion are denied with daring impiety by modern incredulity), that we should insist strongly upon the glorious doctrine of our incorporation into Jesus Christ,—that is to say, the doctrine of the *Deification* of our nature by Jesus Christ. For these two reasons we devote the present Chapter to the subject.

It is of faith that the Word of God, in uniting Himself hypostatically to our human nature, has



elevated that nature to a divine condition ; thus we can say with perfect truth both of the soul and the body to which the Son of God is personally united ; the body is the body of a God, the soul is the soul of a God.

We may say, speaking of the sacred functions performed by the body of Christ, and of the holy operations of this soul of Christ, that they are the actions, the operations of a God. Finally, if we are speaking of the pains of this body, of the tribulations of this soul, we may add, without the slightest fear of falling into error, "These are the sufferings of a God."

Now faith assures us, also, that by the Sacrament of Baptism the Christian contracts with the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ, and consequently with His Godhead, a real and most intimate union, in virtue of which he is admitted to participate, in a certain measure, in the divine qualities of that august Humanity. We cannot do better, when writing upon so sublime and difficult a subject, than borrow from a recent publication of the learned and illustrious Bishop of Poitiers\* certain passages which set forth this glorious truth in all its lustre. In maintaining against modern naturalism the dogma of the Incarnation of God the Son, and of its extension to our human nature, wherever it is found, the eloquent

\* Pastoral Instruction of the Bishop of Poitiers (Cardinal Pie) on the chief errors of the present day.



prelate thus expresses himself: "Our deification in and through Jesus Christ is one of the fundamental truths of Christianity. In this truth we find the titles of our nobility in the present life, and the pledge of our happiness and glory in the life to come. The more naturalism shrouds in its darkness the world of sense, the more should sacred science devote its energies to bring into strong relief the complete mystery of Christ, the God-Man; that is to say, the mystery of human nature deified by the *hypostatic union* in the one and undivided person of Jesus Christ, and by *adoption* in all the members of His body; that is to say, His elect. And this deification involves the whole angelic and terrestrial creation of which man is the centre and the bond of union; a deification which is so obligatory and so strictly commanded, that any one who is not endowed with this supernatural quality, will, when weighed in the divine balance, be found wanting."

St. Augustine says, in fact, speaking of the Word made flesh: *Addidit quod erat naturæ nostræ*. Doubtless the learned prelate is here alluding to this passage: "Ah, in this we behold the immense love of our Father Who is in Heaven! In all past ages, and in all the countless ages yet to come, He has but one Son by nature. But although this Son is all-sufficient to Him, and although in this Son the whole of His fulness dwells, and the essential force of divine generation is exhausted, yet has He been

pleased (not because His own happiness required it, but because He desired to increase the happiness of His creatures) to enlarge the circle of the family of God, and to communicate to other beings in time that title which from all eternity belongs of right to His beloved and sole-begotten Son.

“O adorable economy of Grace! The Word, Who was, and ever will be, the only Son of God, equal and consubstantial with the Father, is made manifest in the flesh, and from the very instant of His Incarnation there was a man who might be called, and who was, in the fullest signification of the term, the Son of God; that is, this Man was one single and identical Person with the Word of God, and the quality of Son of God dwelt in His inaccessible unity, and did not communicate itself to any other individual nature of man.

“It is doubtless true that, through the mystery of the Incarnation, human nature acquired a glorious affinity with God. But the mystery does not stop here. In consequence of sin, man had lost the privilege of his vocation, of his supernatural destiny. He was despoiled of his gratuitous gifts, and was wounded even in his nature. He was born henceforth in a fallen state, a state of spoliation and of suffering; nay, more than this, a state of sin and damnation. This mischief had been irreparable, if the Word, by Whom all things had been created, had not undertaken to become the Sovereign Remedy of all.”

Here the learned Bishop, quoting from St. Paul's Epistles, proceeds to explain the manner in which, by the effusion of His Blood, the Son of God made Man became at once this means and this remedy; and after telling us that the application of this Divine Blood is made to each of us individually in the Sacraments, which in his energetic language he calls the "*infiltration of the Blood of Jesus Christ into the soul*," he completes this magnificent explanation of the doctrine of our incorporation with Jesus Christ in the following words: "On that day when we became Christians our initiation did not merely confer upon us a name; it did not simply make us members of a household; it did not merely bind us to hold fast the doctrine and teaching of Jesus Christ; but it imprinted upon our souls a seal of resemblance, an indelible mark and character; it communicated to our inmost soul the spirit of adoption, by which we cry, 'Abba' (Father), (Rom., viii. 15); and by the sacramental action of Baptism and of the other sacramental signs, but more especially in the Blessed Eucharist, it insinuates into the inmost recesses of our nature the Blood of Him in Whom we are the adopted children of God. By this means we enter actually into His race and generation. *Ipsius enim et genus sumus*. And because we are of the race and offspring of God, *genus ergo cum simus Dei* (Acts, xvii. 28), and because our affiliation is not nominal only, but rigorously true and real, we

become justly and rightfully His heirs—heirs of a common Father together with Jesus Christ, the Eldest Brother of our race; *si filii et hæredes; hæredes quidem Dei, cohæredes autem Christi* (Rom., viii. 17). And thus it is that, although Christ still remains the only-begotten Son of the Father, He is, nevertheless, the First-born among many brethren, *primogenitus in multis fratribus* (Rom. viii. 29), and that in giving us this glorious appellation, He derogates in nothing from His own dignity: *Propter quam causam, non confunditur fratres eos vocare* (Heb., ii. 11). From this cause arises the common form of speech in which we are described as making but one body with Jesus Christ, of which one body He is the Head, and we are the members (1 Cor., x. 11); a body of which all the several parts and members, united and bound together by that which every joint supplieth, assist each other mutually, according to the grace given to each member, and form in one body that wonderful hierarchical organization which establishes dependence in unity, and order in multiplicity. Nothing is more familiar to the tradition and spirit of the earliest ages of the Church than this doctrine of the incorporation of men with Jesus Christ, and of the privileges as well as of the obligations which thus devolve upon ourselves.”

Our quotation has been a long one, but it was difficult to read these eloquent words, and not to yield to the desire, or rather to the need, of again and

again drawing freely from so instructive a source ; for in every one of the lines quoted, as in the branches of a vigorous and prolific tree, there is an abundance of the sap of life, of that divine life concerning which the learned and pious prelate has received the gift of discoursing so beautifully.

## CHAPTER IV.

The Sufferings of the Christian raised to a Divine State by Jesus Christ, or Christian sorrow deified by Jesus Christ.

It will not be difficult for our readers to perceive the practical consequences of the consoling doctrine which has been propounded in the preceding Chapters. Take care, then, to remember what has been said, and profit by it when the next tribulation comes to visit you in the name of the Lord. Since it is certain that your individual humanity is, by its union with the sacred Humanity of Jesus, raised to a divine state, to a real *deification*, it follows that all the actions and sufferings of your humanity, if you perform and endure them in union with Jesus Christ, will be raised in virtue of this union to a divine condition, to a real *deification*; in such a manner that as it may be said of your nature, united to Jesus Christ by Baptism and the other Sacraments, especially by the adorable Eucharist, the nature is *deified*;—so may it be said of your actions and sufferings, done and endured in union with Jesus Christ: they are *deified actions*, *deified sufferings*, and consequently endowed with a *divine power*. We say, “*done and endured in union with Jesus Christ*,” because without that condition your actions and your sufferings would remain in the lower sphere of what is earthly, nat-



ural, and human ; and could not reach the superior regions of the heavenly, supernatural, and divine. In fact, that divine quality and state of which we treated in the preceding Chapter, is implanted in you by the grace of Baptism, and by the other sacred signs of grace, as a *habit*, and not as an *isolated act* ; as a kind of supernatural faculty which enables you to act supernaturally and divinely, but not at all as a divine action in itself. The generous Giver of this truly heavenly gift does not intend by thus communicating to us a new and supernatural power, to deprive us of those natural faculties and powers which He has already bestowed upon us ; far less does He mean to deprive us of our liberty. On the contrary, having once prevented us by His grace, He desires that we should make it in some degree *our own*, by freely accepting it, freely adhering to it ; so that we may be enabled to act *supernaturally* by the assistance of the same grace. But we must not here anticipate what will hereafter be said respecting the practical condition of the deification of our sufferings in and through Jesus Christ. These will form the matter of a special Chapter later on. For the present we will confine ourselves to the definition and explanation of this deification, by setting the subject before our readers in the clearest possible light.

The Son of God, in becoming Man, sanctified all the states and conditions of men, and restored to



us, upon certain conditions, that of which the sin of Adam had deprived us, our *supernatural aptitude*. To explain myself further: man by his act of disobedience had made himself the enemy of God. From that moment all his offerings to God became valueless. In this fallen state it was in vain for him to offer to God his sorrows or his joys, his prosperity or his poverty; the Lord would have answered him as He answered the rebellious people of Israel: "*What honor do I receive from the multitude of your sacrifices? I am filled.*" *Quo mihi multitudinem victimarum vestrarum dicit Dominus. Plenus sum* (Isaias, i. 11.) But the Son of God appeared upon earth to restore all things.

In uniting Himself to our nature by His Incarnation, He mingled with our humanity a divine essence by which it is revived, elevated, expanded, and deified. For the mortal element which corrupted it, and gnawed it like a cancer, He has substituted the quickening element of His own Blood, which restores the supernatural life which our nature had lost. From the ever-memorable moment of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ upon the Cross, man, regenerated by His atoning Blood, has found grace in the sight of God, and is henceforth permitted to bring Him an acceptable offering, the sacrifice of himself, the sacrifice of his possessions, honors, pleasures, and, above all, the sacrifice of his poverty and toil, sufferings and humiliations, and life itself.

Yes, we like to linger upon the thought, henceforth these offerings made by fallen man—provided that they are made in union with the Sacrifice of the Cross—will be received by the Father as an offering of a sweet smell, a sacrifice truly acceptable unto God, and will be judged worthy of the reward of eternal life. But of all the sacrifices which man as a member of Jesus Christ can offer to his Father in Heaven, none are so acceptable to Him as sufferings and afflictions patiently endured after the example and for the love of Jesus Crucified.

The cause of this is that the Son of God, in becoming man, united Himself by preference to a poor, humble, suffering nature; and by this choice, which conferred so much honor upon poverty, humiliation, and sorrow, He has communicated to each one of them, in a superior degree, the divine elevation and the divine character of which we are speaking.

It is not thus as regards prosperity—that is to say, the riches, dignities, and legitimate pleasures of the world. Without doubt, our Lord blesses the right use of all these things, and renders them worthy to be offered to Himself. But observe the difference: He sanctifies temporal prosperity, while at the same time He refuses it for Himself; but He sanctifies affliction, and makes it divine, while He attracts it to Himself, and renders it, we may almost say, part of Himself, *His very self*. Both prosperity and

adversity, then, participate in the blessing and the life-giving influence of our dear Lord. But the greatest share of these is given to affliction ; that is to say, to poverty, humiliation, and suffering. Oh, what a consoling doctrine is this ! You are poor in worldly goods ; you feel the griping hand of poverty ; yet be comforted. The Son of God, by becoming poor, has made poverty divine. Endure it patiently in union with Jesus Christ, in His state of poverty and indigence ; and your poverty will be a treasure of inestimable price. By its aid you will draw nearer to God, the Fountain of all good, from which you would perhaps have wandered far distant had you been placed in a condition of greater prosperity ; because, in giving your affections entirely to the things of earth, you might have lost all taste for the joys of Heaven. You are now clothed with the garment of sadness. But on some future day, the raiment of poverty which now covers you will be transformed into a rich mantle of glory. *Pallium laudis pro spiritu moeroris* (Isaias, lxi. 3). Or, you are humbled in the eyes of the world ; humiliations and scorn and contumely are heaped upon you by your fellowmen. Yet take comfort. The Son of God has made humiliation a divine thing, by taking upon Himself the form of a servant ; and if you endure this abasement in a spirit of faith, and unite it to the sufferings of your Lord, it will become your surest passport to a glorious immortality.

Humiliation is a mysterious sponge which is passed over your life by an invisible hand to efface the stains of sin. Or it may be compared to a tissue of marvellous beauty, the full effect of which is not seen by you, because you only perceive a part of the general design: like those workmen in our great manufactories who execute magnificent designs without the result of their labors ever coming before their eyes, and yet their works are spread out before the gaze of the world, and are the admiration of all who contemplate them. And thus it is with you, afflicted and humbled souls. You are weaving a web of which the celestial beauty is invisible to your eyes now while you are upon earth. Like those workmen who labor for a country not their own, you only see the reverse side of the web you are employed upon. But wait a few days, a few years at the longest, and this piece of workmanship, which now seems so shapeless and deformed, will appear all bright with splendor. The dust and ashes of humiliation have covered your brow, but soon they will be transformed into a crown of glory and brightness. *Coronam pro cinere* (Isaias, lxi. 3).

Or perhaps you are plunged in sadness: some heavy trial has overtaken you; you are overwhelmed by interior tribulation—the sorrows of wounded affection, the mortal agony of the soul; or some unforeseen reverse of fortune has come upon you, and overshadowed your path in life with clouds of

darkness ; a dangerous sickness detains you upon a bed of pain ; or perhaps death, pitiless death, has laid its cold hand upon your dearest earthly treasure. In your excess of grief you have exclaimed, with that king of whom we read in the Sacred Scripture : “ *O death, full of bitterness, how cruel are thy separations !* ” *Siccine separat amara mors !* But still be comforted. The Son of God, when He drained the bitter cup of His most fearful agony in the Garden of Gethsemani and on the Cross, imparted a divine virtue, a sanctifying grace to all the tears which a Christian can shed, or the agonies which he can endure.

Those painful trials which you are called upon to suffer, this inward desolation of the heart, wounded in all its dearest affections, are of immense value in the sight of God, if duly united to those of our Blessed Lord ; if you will only carefully mingle their bitter waters with that cup of agony from which the Son of God drank deeply in the Garden of Olives, and upon the Cross, and indeed throughout the whole course of His mortal life. For, as the pious author of the *Imitation* well observes : “ The whole life of Jesus was a continual Cross and martyrdom.” *Tota vita Christi Crux fuit et martyrrium.* Even a single one of these trials endured with patience, and for the love of God, suffices to open an inexhaustible source of consolation to the poor afflicted soul ; so much so, that—to make use for the

third time of an expression of the Prophet Isaias—  
“*Thy tears which have been to thee as the bitter waters of affliction, shall be changed into the oil of joy.*” *Oleum gaudii pro luctu* (Isaias, lxi. 3).

Take courage, then, all ye children of sorrow, for your afflictions, united to those of our Blessed Lord, are possessed of a supernatural and divine virtue. Sanctified by this union, your suffering is elevated to a divine condition; it shares in the signal honor of *deification*. For such a reward as this, is there a Christian who would not willingly consent to suffer? who will not joyfully exclaim with St. Paul, who understood so well the divine worth of suffering: “*God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*”? *Mihi autem absit gloriari nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi* (Galatians, vi. 14).



## CHAPTER V.

The Divine Efficacy of the Sufferings of Jesus  
Christ, our Head.

Having, then, clearly established in the preceding observations that our sufferings are raised to a divine state through our Lord Jesus Christ, we will now proceed farther into the subject, and by entering into some details show in what respect these sacrifices are *deified*—that is to say, what are the divine effects which they produce, both in favor of the Christian by whom they are endured, and in favor of those for whom they are endured. But in order that a doctrine at once so consoling and so sacred may be proved to the reader in the most solid manner, let us be careful not to separate it from the divine principle to which it owes all its weight and efficacy, no less than the branch of the tree owes its life to the trunk on which it grows. Of this comparison, Jesus Christ Himself makes use, and to it we shall take frequent occasion to return. *Ego sum vitis vos palmites* (St. John, xv. 5). “*I am the Vine, ye are the branches.*” Let us then speak of the divine efficacy of the sufferings of Jesus Christ, our Head, so that it may be more easy for us to comprehend the divine efficacy of the sufferings of the Christian, who is a member of Jesus Christ.



The sufferings of our Blessed Saviour being divine, in consequence of His being God-Man, they derive from this sacred character an efficacy of a nature which is nothing short of divine. By these sufferings, in fact, Jesus Christ makes full and complete reparation for the injury done to Almighty God by man in rejecting and violating His holy laws. By these sufferings He also redeemed and delivered mankind from the punishment to which they were justly reserved by the righteous vengeance of God. By His precious sufferings and death Jesus made a perfect reparation to His outraged Father, and by means of this complete act of reparation He became our Mediator with God, and the Author of our eternal salvation.

St. Thomas, in developing with his usual profound wisdom all the consequences and effects which flow to us from the Redeemer's Cross and Passion, proposes to himself various questions. He asks whether by the passion—that is to say, by the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ—we have been delivered from sin, from the power of the devil, and from the penalty due to sin; whether we are reconciled to God; whether the gates of Heaven have been opened to us; and, finally, whether by these sufferings Jesus Christ has merited to be Himself exalted and glorified. To each of these weighty questions he answers unhesitatingly in the affirmative, and proceeds to say that “by the Passion of Jesus

Christ we are set free from sin, from the tyranny of Satan, and the punishment due to our crimes." Is it not written in our sacred books concerning the Divine Saviour: "*He loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood*"? *Dilexit nos et lavit nos a peccatis nostris in sanguine suo* (Apocalypse, i.). Jesus, by means of the price of His blood, offered to God the Father, Jesus, the voluntary victim of His charity and obedience, has delivered us who are His members.

Just as the human body, although it is composed of divers members, is yet but one body, so the whole Church, which is the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, is regarded by God as one person with its Head, Who is Jesus Christ Himself. In shedding His Blood for us who are His members, our Divine Head has therefore paid a price for us, and in this manner He has delivered us from sin, and consequently also from the punishment due to sin, and from the power of the devil. His flesh which was sacrificed for us, was the holy instrument employed by the Godhead for the accomplishing of this happy deliverance. By means of this flesh the sufferings and actions of our Saviour worked their effect with an efficacy nothing short of divine.

St. Thomas continues: "By the Passion of Jesus Christ we are reconciled to God, and the gates of Heaven are opened to us." The proper effect of this sacrifice is to appease the wrath of God. And

is not the Passion of Jesus Christ the most precious and the most acceptable Sacrifice which ever has been, or ever can be, offered to the Almighty and Eternal God? How could it then be possible that the Passion of Christ should not effect our reconciliation with God? The voluntary sufferings undertaken by Christ were a good of such value in the eyes of His Father, that because of this 'good which He saw offered to Him by human nature—that is to say, by the nature to which His only begotten Son was hypostatically united—God was appeased for all the offences committed by our race. And how could it be otherwise?

How numerous and weighty soever these offences may have been, the charity of our Lord in His sufferings and death has been far greater; greater even than the wickedness of those who put Him to death. Can we be astonished that His Passion was of more power to reconcile God with the whole race of man than to provoke Him to anger and vengeance? Can we be surprised at finding that the same Passion has opened to us the gates of Heaven? It was sin alone which closed them against man; in the first place, the sin common to all mankind—that is to say, the sin of our first parent Adam, transmitted to all his descendants, which we call original sin; and, secondly, the special or actual sin which every man commits by his own act.

Our Blessed Lord has delivered us by His

Passion not only from the sin which is common to all mankind, and this both as regards guilt and the penalty due to it, by paying for us the price of our redemption ; but He has delivered also from his own sins—that is to say, from actual personal sins—each one of those who participate in the merit of His Passion by faith, by charity, and by a diligent use of the Sacraments. His grace is not refused to any one, and by it all may have a share in the benefit of His Cross and Passion.

And thus it is that the gates of Heaven are opened to us by means of the Passion of Jesus Christ.

The last question the Angelic Doctor answers as follows: “Beyond doubt, by His Passion Jesus Christ has merited to be exalted and glorified for ever.” And why? Because in His Passion He humbled Himself, and laid aside His dignity for the love of His Father in four principal things ; for each of which He has merited to receive a special glorification from His Father’s hand. First, He humbled Himself below His dignity in the Passion itself and in the death which He endured, although He was not a debtor to justice, owing either the one or the other, as we are—that is to say, He was not subject to pay that double tribute of suffering and death to God’s justice. In return for this self-abasement, God the Father owed to His Son the glory of the Resurrection ; and Christ received this

glorification when He left the tomb on the third day after His ignominious death upon the Cross.

Secondly: By His act of self-abasement in permitting His body to be laid in the sepulchre, and suffering His soul to descend to the lower parts of the earth—that is to say, to Limbo—He has merited to receive the glory of His ascension into Heaven. St. Paul himself makes this assertion, “*He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth. He that descended is the same also that ascended above all the Heavens*” (Ephesians, iv. 9).

As for the shame and confusion with which He was publicly loaded during His Passion, and by which He again humbled Himself for the love of God His Father, below His own proper dignity, He has merited to sit at the right hand of God the Father, and to show forth the glory of His Divinity. It is again St. Paul who gives us this assurance: “*He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross, for which cause God also hath highly exalted Him, and hath given Him a Name which is above all names; that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in Heaven, on earth, and under the earth*” (Philippians, xi. 8). That is to say, that He should be called and recognized as God by all men, and that all created things should render Him that respect and honor which are due to God. Finally, for abasing Himself, and humbling Himself, by giving Himself up into the



hands of men ; by submitting to the judgment of man, of whom He is Himself the Judge, as He is also his Creator and the Sovereign Master, He has merited to receive the power of judging the living and the dead.

And here may fitly follow, as an eloquent summary of the contents of this Chapter, those beautiful words of Pope St. Gregory : “ In beholding so many miracles, and such great marks of power shining so gloriously in Jesus Christ, there was no room for scandal in the minds of those who witnessed these things ; there was room only for astonishment and admiration. But that which gave great offence and scandal to the minds of the unbelieving was to behold His death, after all the miracles which He had worked.”

“ ‘ *We preach,*’ St. Paul exclaims, ‘ *We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Gentiles foolishness.*’ It has, in fact, been ever regarded as folly by men that the Author of life should for them suffer death. And man has made an occasion of offence and scandal out of this very thing for which he ought to have felt the greatest obligation and gratitude. For God merits to receive more worthy homage from man in proportion as He has suffered, for the love of man, treatment more unworthy of His glory and greatness.”

Such, according to St. Thomas’s summary of the Catholic doctrine upon this point, are the mar-

vellous effects of the Redeemer's Passion, Sufferings, and Death. How sweet it is to think that as we are members of Jesus Christ, our sufferings, united to those of our glorious Head, participate to a certain extent in the same divine efficacy. By these, in fact, the Christian who endures them cheerfully makes reparation in and through Jesus Christ to the outraged glory of God. By them he obtains for his own salvation, and if he asks it for the salvation of others, a large and abundant supply of the sufferings and merits of the Son of God. The following Chapter will show in a still clearer light this truth, which is so consoling, so encouraging in all our afflictions.



## CHAPTER VI.

The Divine Efficacy of the Sufferings of the Christian as a  
Member of Jesus Christ.

Let me address myself to you, O Christians, afflicted and sorrowful, souls tried in the furnace of tribulation, whatever may be the nature of your trials and sufferings; whether it be sickness, infirmity, poverty, reverse of fortune, loss of friends, family trials, painful separation from those most dear to you; or whether it be calumnies, persecutions, difficulties in the path of holiness, voluntary expiations, temptations, dryness, mental trials, wounded affections, oppression of the heart and spirits; or, again, fears, sadness, apprehensions, regrets, bitter remembrances, mortal sickness, the last moments of life: whatever may be your troubles, as members of Jesus Christ, by the grace of holy Baptism, and of the other Sacraments, but more especially by the Sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist, you enter, in virtue of this divine incorporation with your Divine Head, into participation with Himself—that is to say, with His life, His virtues, His merits, His sufferings, and His divine nature: *Divinae consortes naturae*. The Apostle St. Peter gives us this assurance. When you suffer, Jesus Christ suffers in you. Take care to keep your suffering united to that of

your Divine Head ; so shall that divine life, that most desirable life, the life which He lives as God-Man, be developed in you, poor child of Adam, just as the sap flows from the trunk into the branch with which it is united, communicating to it its own fertility and life. Thus your sufferings, purified by union with the sufferings of your Divine Head, will enable you to enter into participation for your own personal profit, and, if certain conditions be observed, for the profit of others, in all the effects of His Passion. Our reasoning is based upon the supposition that you are in a state of grace—that is to say, that you are united as a living member to your Head, joined as a fruitful branch to the Tree of Life. Unless this condition be fulfilled, the divine sap which gives life to the sufferings of the Christian will be checked in its circulation, and it will have no other effect upon you than the momentary one of putting an end to your state of spiritual death—that is to say, of restoring you to such a condition as will enable the circulation of spiritual life to take place in you once more. We shall explain at the end of this Chapter how suffering, patiently endured by the sinner who has lost the divine life, acts efficaciously so as to restore the treasure which he has forfeited.

Supposing, then, that you are in a state of grace, we address you thus : Happy disciple of Jesus Christ, your sufferings, united to those of your Divine Master, have an efficacy which is nothing short of divine.

By means of these sufferings you free yourself more and more from the sad effects of your sins, and you prevent the devil from again establishing his dominion in your heart. Suffering, if endured with faith and patience, by supplying you with a most efficacious means of making ever-increasing satisfaction for your sins, will furnish you with a most efficacious means of making satisfaction to the divine justice for the debt for which you are perhaps still in some degree responsible—that is to say, for the temporal penalty due to your sins. By your sufferings, moreover, you obtain the remission of those venial sins which you have committed through negligence or weakness. And this is no slight advantage, especially in the eyes of a truly spiritually minded Christian, who beholds in the clear light of faith how hurtful to the soul's advancement in the paths of solid perfection, is venial sin committed deliberately and habitually. And it is thus that our sufferings, in delivering us from the sad remains of sin, in purifying our souls ever more and more, fill up in us, according to the doctrine of St. Paul, that which was wanting in the Passion of Jesus Christ: *Adimpleo ea quae desunt passionum Christi*. By this energetic expression, as we shall explain more fully hereafter, the great Apostle gives us to understand that the sufferings of Jesus Christ, in order to be fully applied to us, require to have completion and perfection given them by our own; and that as our

Divine Head was compelled to suffer, so all His members must suffer with Him if they hope to participate in the benefits of His Passion and Death. *Si tamen compatimur, ut et conglorificemur.* If it had been otherwise, that admirable and divine harmony which now exists between the Head and the members of the "Mystical Body of Jesus Christ," as it is called in the inspired language of the Church, would be negated and destroyed. For what harmony can there be between members who have never known sorrow and a Head Who is crowned with thorns?

By means of His Passion, Jesus has reconciled you with God His Father. By your sufferings united to His, you obtain a renewed confirmation of that blessed reconciliation,—that is to say, an augmentation of sanctifying grace, which is its precious assurance and pledge, or rather which is in you, by Jesus Christ, this very reconciliation itself. You enter more fully into fellowship with the Father, because your sufferings effect in you a more perfect resemblance to His well-beloved Son. There is nothing, in fact, which the Father so delights to find in the members of His Son as a resemblance to the suffering and crucified life of that same Son. For this reason, too, there is nothing which the Divine Son takes so much delight in offering to God the Father, as the continuation of His own sufferings in the members of His Mystical Body. Ah! if the sorrows which we all endure in passing through this vale of tears,

may fitly be accounted for in the requirements of Divine Justice, still more truly are they explained by the transcendent love of Jesus for His Heavenly Father. As now that He is in glory, He can no longer suffer, "*for Christ being risen from the dead, dieth no more, suffereth no more;*" He, nevertheless, desires to suffer for His Father's love, and for our love, in the person of His members; in them He delights to reproduce Himself as in so many suffering and crucified Christs; thus perpetuating to the end of the world His own loving and sorrowful Passion. He designs also to show us in this way the eminent advantage which we all derive from thus suffering in union with our Divine Head, by Whose heavenly virtue our sufferings are made divine. And therefore it is that He gives us so large a share in His chalice and in His Cross; and the more deeply the Christian drinks of this salutary but bitter cup, the more abundantly is his soul strengthened and refreshed by that fountain of living waters springing from the tree of life; a stream which is no other than the life-giving Blood of Jesus Crucified.

Christian soul, member of Jesus Christ, you are suffering, and you complain; perhaps even you are murmuring against the divine will. Ah! rejoice, rather, and bless the Lord, by Whose paternal hand you are smitten. This trial, which to you seems so severe, is a visit from your God, as is said by holy Job, that perfect type of sorrow and patience:



“*Thou dost visit him every morning, and try him every moment.*” *Visitas eum diluculo, et subito probas illum* (Job, vii. 18). This trial is a new and higher degree of incorporation of your whole being into your Divine Head, Jesus Christ ; and it is consequently a more abundant participation of His divine life, and a fresh guarantee of the friendship of God for you, and of your reconciliation with Him.

If you are so unfortunate as not to be in a state of grace when the trial is sent to you, yet be assured that it is none the less a visit from our Lord to you ; a trial by which He gives you a gracious invitation to return to the bosom of your Father. And this leads us to say that suffering is exceedingly advantageous, even for the sinner who is in a state of mortal sin. Without doubt, such a one does not merit by his sufferings, with a merit properly so called ; that is to say, with that merit which confers a right to the remuneration founded upon strict justice and condignity, *de condigno*, as the theologians express it. But yet by enduring these sufferings with humility and submission, he acquires a kind of merit of congruity, which disposes God favorably toward him, attracts to him a glance of divine mercy, and thus prepares the way for the eventual reconciliation of the sinner with his God, by the recovery of the sanctifying grace which he had lost. How many poor wandering sheep have thus been recalled to the fold ! How many poor sinners have been thus



restored to friendship with God, and fully reconciled to Him by the instrumentality of sickness, reverses, affliction, misfortune! It was this feeling that caused David to say: "*It is good for me that I have been afflicted.*" *Bonum mihi quia humiliasti me* (Psalm cxviii.). It was this that made the Wise Man exclaim, "It is better to go into the house of mourning than into the house of feasting;" meaning to teach us by that maxim that, taking things as a whole, in the present state of mankind, suffering is more salutary for us than pleasure. The reason of this is that suffering is able, by detaching us from our intense affection for earthly things, to bring us closer to God, the Fountain of all good; whilst pleasure only serves to turn us away from God, by attaching us more and more to the perishable things of earth.

Therefore when you are visited by sorrow or adversity, whatever may be the state of your soul at the time, accept this trouble submissively, resign yourself, and bless the hand of God, saying with the holy patriarch Job: "*The Lord has given, and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.*" *Dominus dedit, Dominus abstulit, sit Nomen Domini benedictum* (Job, i.). God had bestowed upon you health, worldly goods, family comforts; now He has taken them away again, blessed for ever be His holy Name. He had granted you the consolations of the spiritual life, clear light, holy inspira-

tions, and sensible fervor. You no longer seemed to feel the weight of your Cross, for the Holy Spirit had poured His sweet unction upon it, and rendered it light and easy. But suddenly all this happiness disappears, and is succeeded by desolation, darkness, heaviness, and a kind of paralysis of soul in all that relates to perfection. What can you do in this state of darkness? Say again, and say ever: "*The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away*. As it hath pleased the Lord, so hath it been done unto me, blessed be the Name of the Lord." *Sit Nomen Domini benedictum*. The good and merciful God knows far better than we do what is most wholesome and salutary for us.

Let us then with equal gratitude receive from His hand consolation or desolation; and let us remember that this sickness, this infirmity, this reverse of fortune, this affliction under which you groan, is a precious particle of the Cross of Jesus. It is a drop of His atoning Blood falling upon you from His open Wounds, and bringing you comfort and salvation.

If at the moment when that beloved Redeemer was expiring on Calvary, you had had the happiness of standing at the foot of His Cross, and if a drop of His Blood had fallen from His Sacred Wounds upon your clothing, with what respect and love would you not have gathered up that sacred relic! But, I ask of you, as often as our Lord visits you by

tribulation and sorrow, do you not receive in a certain manner the very same unspeakable favor? inasmuch as your sufferings (when you take care to unite them to those of Jesus Christ) are by that means united also to His divine and precious Blood. So that if we were to squeeze with the hand, so to say, the sufferings of a Christian, we should cause the blood of the Son of God to issue therefrom. Jesus, as the Head of His Mystical Body, unites so closely the sufferings of His members with His own sufferings, that He makes them one with His own; just as His members form but one Mystical Body, of which He is the Head. Ah! what a different aspect does suffering present when considered from this higher point of view, from that in which we are generally accustomed to contemplate it. Just in proportion as it appears sad, humiliating, and overwhelming, when not illuminated by the light of faith,—when not accepted from supernatural motives—so does it now become invested with peculiar attributes of sweetness and sublimity, which rejoice the soul of man, even while they afflict him, and ennoble even while they humble him. Suffering is like the rose that flourishes close beside the thorn; suffering is a fruit of exquisite sweetness, hidden under a hard and bitter rind; suffering is the purest gold buried under a coarse covering of earth. Can we then be surprised to find that trials endured with patient resignation render us acceptable to God, and open to us

the gates of Heaven? Can we wonder that they enable us to be one day glorified with Jesus Christ in the eternal mansions of the blessed? This consoling truth we shall proceed to discuss at length in the succeeding Chapter.

## CHAPTER VII.

## God's Recompense for Christian Suffering.

Although it would not be correct to say of our sufferings that by them we are lowered in dignity (for what abasement can possibly be too great for one who has offended the infinite Majesty of God?), yet we cannot but admire the mercy and goodness of the Almighty. By a disposition of His infinite clemency, it is so ordained that suffering procures for the Christian, who endures it with piety and resignation, a degree of glory proportionate in its extent to his previous affliction and humiliation. And here you may again recall to remembrance the holy example set before us by the patriarch Job. He was completely overwhelmed by tribulation. In his excess of grief, his life became a burthen to him, and he exclaimed: "*Wherefore, O my God, hast Thou brought me forth out of my mother's womb? Are not my days few in number? Spare me, that I may weep a little over my sorrow, before I go whence I shall not return: to the land of darkness and the shadow of death, a land of misery and of darkness itself, where the shadow of death dwells, and no order reigns*" (Job, x.). This land of darkness is the tomb. If, like Job, you feel that sorrow and tribulation are little by little undermining your life, if

your sickness has brought you so near to the gates of the grave that in a few months or days you expect to sink into it, then remember that this same Job, having given utterance to his grief, and with a voice of bitter lamentation exclaimed again: "*Have pity upon me! have pity upon me! all ye at least who are my friends;*" suddenly raises himself above his affliction by a sublime effort, and cries aloud, with a hopeful heart: "*Oh that my words were written, that they were graven in the rock for ever. For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall rise again from earth.*" See how the sure and certain hope of the resurrection comforts him amidst his most severe trials.

Let it be thus also with you, afflicted souls! The more numerous and painful your afflictions, the more you are conscious that suffering is digging a deep tomb beneath your feet, the more you may be assured that you will receive continually increasing abundance of God's gifts. From this depth of humiliation you will arise to a new life, to more energetic resolutions, to more solid piety, to a virtue more prolific in actions of generosity. You shall have your glorious ascensions; those ascensions from strength to strength, from grace to grace, of which the Psalmist speaks when he says of the just and afflicted man who puts his hope in the Lord: "*He has prepared ascensions in his heart in the valley of tears.*" *Ascensiones in corde suo disposuit, in valle*



*lacrymarum.* He will go from strength to strength, for the Supreme Lawgiver, Whose behests he has faithfully accomplished even in the time of his deepest sufferings, will pour forth His blessing upon him. *Etenim benedictionem dabit legislator, ibunt de virtute in virtutem.* “*And God shall be seen in Sion.*” *Videbitur Deus deorum in Sion.* That is to say, the life of God, the divine life of Jesus, shall be seen and manifested in you, afflicted soul, as in another Sion in which He delights to dwell. This divine life shall be bestowed upon you with a kind of plenitude, and in you shall be accomplished the most anxious desire of the Good Shepherd, Who wishes nothing so ardently as to behold His sheep receiving with increased abundance that divine life of which He is Himself the inexhaustible source and fountain: *Ut vitam habeant, et abundantius habeant.*

The oak of the forest takes deeper root in the earth, and grows more vigorously, just in proportion as it is buffeted by the tempest. And so does tribulation, in pouring all its waves and storms over your devoted head, ground you more firmly than before in the practice of faith and virtue. There is nothing, in fact, which gives more strength to the soul, and fortifies it more effectually in the service of God, than temptations vanquished, than trial borne courageously, for the love of God. Like an intrepid wrestler, the disciple of Jesus Christ becomes more agile and vigorous with every combat successfully

endured. And tribulations, in the merciful designs of Providence, not only become the means of enabling us to expiate our sins, and of detaching us from the things of earth, but they also ground and establish us more and more in the practice of virtue, especially of humility, patience, self-contempt, and the love of God and of our neighbor: and consequently they aid us in acquiring new merit, and in preparing for us hereafter, as St. Paul expresses it, "*an eternal weight of glory.*" *Æternum gloriæ pondus operatur in nobis.*

How could the Christian who suffers thus courageously in union with Jesus Christ, his Divine Head, fail to receive an abundant share of His glories and celestial joys? How could it be that, after participating so freely, for the love of Him, in the chalice of His agony and death, he should not hereafter enjoy a glorious resurrection, a glorious welcome to the courts of Heaven? How could he fail to receive from the hand of God, as an eternal reward, "an inheritance unspeakably great, excellent, and eternal?" Has not St. Paul said: "*If we suffer with Jesus Christ, we shall be also glorified with Him*"? *Si tamen compatimur, ut et conglorificemur* (Romans, viii.).

You have suffered with Jesus Christ, you have borne patiently, for His sake, this sickness, this adversity, this painful loss of a father, mother, brother, sister, or of the beloved child on whom all

your earthly hopes were fixed. You have accepted with love and submission the trials of the spiritual life—temptations, dryness, desolation, intense pains and agonies of the soul. You have then fulfilled the condition laid down by the great Apostle: *Si tamen compatimur*. And if you continue faithful, you will assuredly witness the verification of the second part of the oracle in your own person, and be glorified in Heaven with Him for Whose love you have suffered freely upon earth: *Si tamen compatimur, ut et conglorificemur*. The example of St. Paul himself is a sure warrant and guarantee that you will not be disappointed of your hope, for he says, in speaking of himself, and of all that he had endured for the sake of Jesus Christ, “*I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day.*” *Bonum certamen certavi, cursum consummavi, fidem servavi; in reliquo reposita est mihi corona justitiæ.* (II. Timothy, iv.)

Yes, crosses—sufferings—for the Christian who bears them patiently in union with Jesus Christ his Divine Head, are a sure pledge of predestination. The following touching thought is from the book called *The Man of Prayer*, by the Jesuit Father Nonet.

“Glory, grace, and the Cross are wondrously bound up together. The Eternal Word has first

united them in His own Person and then in that of His Blessed Mother, and last of all in the person of each of His elect; so that, if one of these three shining marks of their predestination be taken from them, their names will be blotted out of the book of life. The Cross is the measure of grace, grace is the measure of glory. If you refuse the Cross offered you by the Son of God, you will shut out His love from your soul and lose your crown."

This explains how the Saints, enlightened from on high, prized and loved suffering to such a degree that they seemed to have a holy and insatiable thirst for it.

We read this in the life of St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, an heroic Saint of the Cross. In her last illness, while she was in great pain, a nun whom she had trained in the noviceship showed compassion for her sufferings and said to her: "Mother Mistress, it is very strange that God should give you every day some new subject of suffering." The Saint answered: "Dear Sister, from my youth up this is what I have always desired, and I consider it a very great grace; I have been in the habit of asking for it in a special manner after each of my Communions." To this she added: "The practice of patience is so sublime a thing that the Eternal Word of God, Who in the bosom of the Father enjoyed all the delights and good things of Paradise, came down on earth to clothe Himself with the garment of suffering and

patience, which He could not find in Heaven. Now *the Word was God*, and He could not deceive us."

To another Sister who expressed compassion for so much suffering, the Saint made answer: "I rest satisfied with all which it is God's good pleasure to give me, and to Him from my heart I make the sacrifice of every consolation—provided only I may be saved."

## CHAPTER VIII.

The Divine Efficacy of Suffering endured for the Salvation of Souls.—The Divine Mission of Suffering in Jesus Christ.

Having hitherto shown the happy effects of suffering in ourselves, we must now explain how by union with Jesus Christ our Lord we are enabled to exercise the *apostleship* of suffering—that is to say, how by means of these sufferings we may become the instruments in the hands of God of working out the eternal salvation of others. This we hope will be found to be the legitimate conclusion drawn from the following considerations, which are intended to demonstrate the *divine mission* of suffering in effecting the salvation of souls. By the expression the *divine mission* of suffering, we understand that in and through Jesus Christ, the sufferings of Christians, who are the members of His Mystical Body, are destined in an especial manner to complete, to “fill up,” as St. Paul expresses it, the work of Redemption which was accomplished by the Son of God. To place this important matter in all its light, it will be necessary to explain, in the first place, the *divine mission* of suffering in Jesus Christ Himself, and also in the establishment of the Catholic religion.

The Son of God, in fact, in communicating to



His sufferings a divine virtue, bestowed upon them at the same moment a *divine mission*, which is that of saving the world. For this end He suffered, and for this He died upon the Cross. The Catholic Church being entrusted with the continuation of His divine work, or rather with its application to the world at large, is necessarily associated with the sufferings of the Son of God, and also with the divine mission of His sufferings. The Church, as the sole depositary of the merits of the Redeemer, is founded upon the Cross, has been extended, and is still propagated by the Cross, and will also receive its final consummation by the Cross; so that the inspired words uttered by St. Paul, *Christum oportuit pati*, "*Christ must needs have suffered*" (Acts, xvii. 3), seem to overshadow all ages of the Church, from Calvary to the end of the world. They are like a divine word of command which all generations of men are bound to obey, under penalty of being forever excluded from the benefits of Redemption. That Jesus Christ has conferred a divine mission upon His own sufferings; that by His death upon the Cross He inaugurated in His own person the *apostleship of suffering*; and that He established His divine religion by the Cross,—what fact is there more clearly demonstrated than this in all history? From its station upon the heights of Golgotha, the sacred Sign of our Redemption rules supreme over all ages and all nations.

The eye of man is ever directed from every region, and from the remotest point of space, to that mysterious mountain whence cometh our salvation, where the Cross, appearing like a glorious beacon light, illuminates the darkness of successive centuries by its rays of heavenly brightness, and guides over the troubled waves of time all generations of mankind, in their ceaseless voyage toward eternity. From before the coming of Christ, the Cross cast, by a marvellous anticipation, its divine glory over the most remote ages, even when from the very cradle of the world its reflection was still dimly seen. Isaias had beheld it in prophetic vision long before the day which saw it raised on Calvary; he cried, beholding the Sacred Victim Who was suspended upon it, "*Behold the Man of Sorrows!*" *Virum dolorum*. "*Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.*" *Vere languores nostros ipse tulit, et dolores nostros ipse portavit.*" (Isaias, liii.)

All those types in the Ancient Law which prefigured with more exactness than others the Redemption of the human race by Jesus Christ, bore, it may be observed, some express reference to the shedding of blood upon the Cross: the just Abel murdered by Cain; Isaac, an obedient victim, bearing on his shoulders the wood for his own sacrifice; Joseph sold into bondage by his brothers; Job, the perfect type of patience and suffering; Jeremias, the prophet of lamentations and tears, weeping over the Passion

of the God-Man, as if he had been present at His death;—in a word, nearly all the principal personages of the Old Testament, but more especially the Prophets who were taught to predict the future Saviour, were the living figures of His sufferings. Listen to St. Paul, celebrating in magnificent language the faith and courage of those holy witnesses and martyrs by anticipation, in testimony of the God-Man: “*They had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, of bonds, moreover, and imprisonment; they were stoned, they were cut asunder, they were tempted, they were put to death by the sword, they wandered about in sheep-skins, in goat-skins, being in want, distressed, afflicted, of whom the world was not worthy, wandering in deserts, in mountains, and in dens, and in caves of the earth.*” *Quibus dignus non erat mundus. In solitudinibus errantes, in montibus et speluncis et in cavernis terræ.* (Hebrews, xi. 38.) Now, why did they suffer thus? Because they were the precursors and figures of the great Victim of Calvary, and were thus obliged to exhibit in their own persons some among the peculiar features of His Cross and Passion. By thus suffering and praying throughout those long dark centuries of sad and earnest expectation, they averted the just anger of God from this guilty earth. “These men,” says a learned commentator, “were of a dignity so great that the world was not worthy to possess them. By their prayers, and by their saintly lives, they

obtained from God the preservation of towns, of provinces, even of the world itself; they turned away the wrath of God from sinful men, who might otherwise have been swallowed up in another deluge."

Do you now see how efficacious was the apostleship of suffering even before the coming of the Messias? How much greater will the marvellous virtue of this apostleship become after His first appearance amongst us? If the prayers, the sufferings, the merits of the Saints of the Old Law exercised so salutary an influence over their contemporaries, how much more shall the prayers, the sufferings, and the merits of the Saints of the New Law, after Jesus Christ has really shed His Blood upon Mount Calvary, exert a healing, saving influence on their own generation, as well as on the world at large?

The Messias, so long desired of all nations, has at length appeared. From His cradle to His tomb, His life bore the impress of sorrow, and, as we may say, the seal and stamp of the Cross to which He was to be affixed for the redemption of the whole race of mankind. It had been thus decreed by God the Father in His infinite wisdom: "*Christ must needs suffer.*" *Christum oportuit pati.* He spent three years of His mortal life in preaching the Gospel, but *before, during, and after* His ministry, He *suffered* continually, until He crowned the sacrifice of His whole life by a death of agony upon the Cross. Jesus, then, became the Mediator between God and Man, in virtue of His sufferings and death.

*The Cross of Christ* is the only means of attaining salvation for us poor children of Adam. This has been determined by a decree of Him Who never changes. "*Through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, making peace through the blood of His Cross,*" as St. Paul expresses it: *Per sanguinem crucis ejus* (Colossians, i. 20).

From this incontestable principle we may proceed to consider what further remains to be said with respect to the divine mission of suffering in the living members of Jesus Christ.

But first let us complete what has been said with these few thoughts. It was so true that "*Christ must needs suffer*" and die that St. John, in the Apocalypse, where he speaks of Jesus Christ—the Lamb offered in sacrifice—does not hesitate to say: "*He was slain from the beginning of the world,*" *Qui occisus est ab origine mundi* (Apocalypse, xiii. 8). In truth, it was by the eternal decree of God that the Christ was held ready—predestined—for the sacrifice; and in the eyes of God, to Whom all things are ever present, He was already offered up from all eternity. But that which, for four thousand years, was only a sacrifice decreed and as it were virtually anticipated, became a fearful reality to the Saviour Christ from the first instant of His mortal life, and most of all in His Agony in the Garden of Olives, during His Passion, and at His death.

We have the testimony of the great St. Catha-



rine of Siena to this continual offering of the Man-God in sacrifice. The author of her life tells us that, when she spoke of our Saviour's sufferings, she very often declared, with a tone of entire certainty, that in His soul He had borne the Cross from the first moment of His conception, because of His exceeding great desire for the salvation of all men. Jesus Christ loved God and man with a perfect love, she would say ; and therefore He suffered within His Heart the torments of a real martyrdom until, by His Passion and death, He had restored to God that honor of which man's sin had robbed Him, and to man that salvation which he had forever lost by his sin. Imagine not, she added, that this Cross was light and easy: No, it was very great and very heavy.

This is the declaration of a Saint to whom our Lord deigned to reveal Himself and whom He closely associated with His own crucified life. It is moreover the common opinion of all, summed up in the well-known words of the author of the *Imitation of Christ*: "The whole life of Christ was a Cross and a martyrdom."



## CHAPTER IX.

The Divine Mission of Suffering exemplified in Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

When it pleases the Divine Redeemer to associate any of our race with Himself in His work of reparation, He associates them at the same time with that instrument or means of reparation which He made choice of for the redemption of the world,—that is to say, with the Cross.

And it is for this reason that the Catholic Church, which has received from Jesus Christ the mission of continuing His work of reparation throughout all the ages of the world, by applying the merits of our Redeemer to mankind, bears ever on her brow the bleeding Sign of the Cross, and is ever subject to persecution and suffering. From this cause arises the title of *militant*, bestowed upon our Mother the Church, which is also applicable in a greater or less degree to each one of her children. And thence to those souls which our Blessed Lord condescends to associate more particularly with Himself in His great mission of reparation, He grants a share in His sufferings commensurate with the part which He has assigned them in co-operating in this great work. We need not quote more than one instance, the most glorious of all; for who does

not know that the most excellent of all creatures, she who is called by the Fathers and Doctors the second *Mediator* of the world, was also its second VICTIM! she whom we invoke under the title of Mother of God, and Queen of Apostles, *Mater Dei, Regina Apostolorum*, is also invoked by us under the title of Virgin of Dolors, and Queen of Martyrs, *Virgo dolorosissima, Regina Martyrum*. While reading in the Gospel the prophecy of holy Simeon, have you never been struck by the close connection which he establishes between the sorrows of Jesus and the sorrows of Mary,—that is to say, between Jesus the Victim, and Mary the Victim, for the salvation of souls? “*This Child*,” exclaimed he, “*is set for a Sign that shall be contradicted.*” *In signum cui contradicetur*. And he adds immediately afterward to Mary: “*And thine own soul a sword of sorrow shall pierce.*” *Et tuam ipsius animam pertransibit gladius*. The remainder of the Blessed Virgin’s life was a continual application of this prophecy. From that time forth, the life of Mary becomes, like that of her Divine Son, a perpetual cross and martyrdom. Her certain prevision of the torments and death of her Son, and after He had expired upon the Cross the sad and bitter remembrance of His Agony and Passion, were to her as a two-edged sword, which inflicted upon her maternal heart a wound which was incessantly renewed.

But it was more particularly at the foot of the

Cross that she felt the full sharpness of this sword, because it was in that place, above all others, that she was especially associated with her Divine Son in the work of our redemption. Yes, it was upon that Calvary, whence the Blood of Jesus poured forth in copious streams, that Mary has brought us forth in sorrow to the life of grace, receiving into her compassionate heart the reflex, as it were, of the sufferings and death of her Divine Son. And there also it was that she solemnly accomplished her mission of *Second Victim* of the human race. The world had been lost and ruined by the sin of a man and woman; and by a man and a woman it was to be saved. This man is Jesus, at once God and Man; this woman is Mary, Mother of God made Man for us.

Yet it is undoubtedly true that, as there is one only God, so is “*there one only Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus.*” *Unus enim Deus, unus et Mediator Dei et hominum, homo Christus Jesus* (I. Timothy, ii.). And it is no less true that this divine and only Mediator chose to give a special share in His work of mediation to her from whom he had received His human life. And for this reason it is that He has associated her so intimately with His Cross, which is the instrument of our Redemption. It would be impossible for us to determine the extent to which Mary co-operated in that great mystery; this secret is known to God alone.

In Heaven we shall discover, with many other marvellous revelations, the ineffable relations of intimacy that existed between Jesus and Mary—between the work of the Son and the co-operation of the Mother—such as our weakness would now be, perhaps, unable to comprehend. *Non potestis portare modo.* But we need not fear to go astray in asserting, with St. Epiphanius, that Mary was the Mediator between earth and Heaven, and the natural means of effecting their union. *Ipsa enim est cæli et terræ mediatrix quæ unionem naturaliter peregīt.* May we not also say that at the foot of the Cross Mary resembled a mystic chalice, in which all the Precious Blood of our dear Redeemer was with anxious care stored up, to be thence distributed to future generations of mankind? Does not Holy Church herself give us to understand this when she calls Mary “Mother of divine grace” — *Mater divinæ gratiæ* — of that grace which flows to us with the sap of the tree of life,—that is to say, with the Blood of our Blessed Lord flowing in torrents on Calvary from His streaming Wounds? Does not this explain those titles which we are taught by the holy Doctors of the Church to apply to Mary—“Channel of grace,” “Dispenser of grace”?

It is from her that the Apostles, and by their hands the whole Church, received that precious treasure by which we are enabled to purchase our title to life eternal. And was it not most appro-

priate that Jesus, Who received from Mary all that Blood through which He had His human life, should confide to His Mother the same Blood, now become the Blood of God ?

In divine love are many unfathomable mysteries, depths of infinite delicacy and tenderness. Who shall be able to comprehend all that must have been felt by the most loving of all Sons toward the most loving of all Mothers ?

However that may be, let us never forget that after Jesus, it is Mary who has contributed most fully to the great work of the reconciliation of the human race, not only because she is the Mother of the Redeemer, but also because she shared with Him the office of *Victim* for our salvation ; and because the *Compassion* of the Mother perfectly corresponded to the *Passion* of the Son. Hence arises that work of the supernatural life with which the Blessed Virgin has never ceased, throughout the whole course of the centuries since the foundation of the Christian religion, to co-operate in the Church, and in the souls of men. Hence that universal and most potent influence which the Catholic sense has unanimously attributed to her in the onward march of those events which concern Holy Church in general, and each one of her members in particular. Is there a single age of the Church when Mary has not proved her protection over us, her children, by striking signs ? Or is there a single child of the Church who is not indebted to Mary for many and signal benefits ?



If, then, you inquire the reason of this continual and most efficacious intervention, we reply: "It is not only because Mary is Mother of God, and Mother of Men, but also because she is the Second *Victim* for the sins of the world; and because she, in this capacity, desires most ardently that neither her own sufferings nor the sufferings of her beloved Son should be lost to the children of Adam, who are now become her own children by adoption. It is because, in the person of Mary, suffering has received, from and through Jesus Christ, a divine mission, even that of co-operating in the salvation of the human race. O sinners, remember the tears, the groans of your Mother, and be converted! *Gemitus Matris tuæ ne obliviscaris* (Ecclesiastes, vii. 29). Such, then, is the divine mission of suffering, in the order of the salvation of souls. Upon suffering, as upon a firm and immovable foundation, has the Son of God established the beautiful edifice of our holy religion, which springs from His Blood and His Sorrows, as the flower from its stem. The founder of the Catholic religion is a Crucified Man—"a man of sorrows." *Virum dolorum*.

She who co-operates with Him in the work of our Redemption is a victim associated in His Passion; a Virgin of sorrows. *Virgo dolorosissima*.

Who can now doubt of the divine mission of suffering? Who shall dare to doubt of the divine virtue of the apostleship of suffering?



## CHAPTER X.

The Divine Mission of Suffering exemplified in the Apostles, Martyrs, and Apostolic Men of all Ages.

After Mary, it was the Apostles whom Jesus chose to be the most intimately associated with Him in His work of reparation, and consequently in His Cross. He chose them to co-operate with Him as leaders in His great enterprise, on the condition that they should consent to labor in it, like Himself, by suffering and self-sacrifice. One day when He was alone with them, He said: "*The Son of Man must suffer, and be rejected by the ancients and chief priests and scribes, and be put to death, and the third day He shall rise again.*" And to make them understand the perfect resemblance to their Crucified Master which they should endeavor to attain, He added, speaking to Christians in general: "*If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me; for whosoever would save his life shall lose it, and he that shall lose his life for My sake shall save it*" (St. Luke, ix. 22). In other places He predicts persecutions which they will have to endure because they are His servants and His ministers. "*Remember,*" He says, "*My word that I have spoken to you: The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me,*

*they will also persecute you."* *Si me persecuti sunt, et vos persequentur.* (St. John, xv. 20.)

Observe that when our Lord addressed these words to His disciples, He had just before conferred upon them their Apostolic mission, by saying to them: "*You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and have appointed you that you should go and should bring forth fruit, and your fruit should remain.*" *Ut fructus vester maneat.* (St. John, xv. 16.) By this connection our Divine Master gives His disciples to understand that persecutions and sufferings are inseparable from the Apostolic ministry which He has conferred upon them; and that, in proportion to their sufferings and voluntary endurance of the Cross for His sake will be the fruitfulness of their ministry in the salvation of souls. As He proceeds, He confirms the truth of this doctrine, and adds to it the most touching encouragement, saying to them: "*In the world you shall have distress; but have confidence, I have overcome the world.*" *In mundo pressuram habebitis; sed confidite, ego vici mundum.* (St. John, xvi. 33.)

Such was the destiny of the Apostles: as living images of their Master, they were to be the perpetuators of the teaching of His Passion. They were to preach to the people Jesus Crucified; they were to suffer and die with Him and for Him. Apostles both in word and deed, they were to water with their blood the doctrine which they were to preach in the

name of Jesus Crucified. When scorned and rejected, they were to be still full of joy, because they had been judged worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus Christ. *Ibant gaudentes, quoniam digni habiti sunt pro nomine Jesu contumeliam pati.* (Acts, v. 41.) When their last hour should arrive, they were to be quite ready to lay down their lives for Jesus Christ, and for the souls which He redeemed by His own Blood. The Prince of the Apostles, St. Peter, was to die upon the Cross, like his Master before him. As indefatigable laborers in the Lord's vineyard, after having watered it with their sweat, they were also to water it with their blood. All, without exception, were to be victims and martyrs. Thus the Catholic faith having been founded on the Cross, received its earliest propagation by the Cross.

But what do we next behold? Three consecutive centuries of persecution have passed over this religion, which, carried by Apostles bearing the Cross to the farthest extremities of the known world, is received by ungrateful men who strive to drown it in seas of blood. Thus does the work of regeneration, begun on Calvary, still attain its end by the means which heralded its commencement—that is to say, by blood-shedding; by the Passion of Christ perpetuated in His members; in a word, by the Cross. Ah! how full of truth is that expression of Tertullian, *Sanguis Martyrum semen Christianorum.* “The blood of the Martyrs is the seed of the

Church." To any one who may be inclined to doubt it, we would say : Go to Rome, and enter the catacombs, where during these three centuries the bleeding and mutilated corpses of the Martyrs were interred. In this very place, where that noble blood was poured out like water, once arose the proud and haughty capital of the heathen world—the Rome of the Emperors ; and now, over the ruins of this heathen Rome, rises the capital of the Christian world—the Rome of the Pontiffs, of the Vicars of Christ Crucified, successors of the crucified Peter, successors of the Apostles, and themselves all Martyrs. The Cross has overcome the sword ; the idols have been overthrown by the blood-shedding of the Saints. From Mount Calvary, where it first arose amidst shame and ignominy, the Cross has been transplanted in triumph to the Janiculum ; and there, as on a throne of glory, Christ rules the world, and reigns victorious over the ruins of conquered paganism. *Christus vincit, regnat, imperat.* All glory to the Cross of Christ ! Glory to the Martyrs, who are the children of the Cross ! Let all due honor be paid to their sacred remains, and to their tombs, venerable with the age of eighteen centuries.

Let us listen to the touching relation of a pious pilgrim who described what he saw in those sacred catacombs, which form so imperishable a monument of Christian courage, and such an unanswerable proof of the wonderful fertility of the apostleship of suffering for the salvation of souls.

“I was filled with admiration, and moved to tenderest devotion, when I beheld the Catacombs of St. Sebastian, in the immediate neighborhood of Rome, where the bodies of the holy Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul lay hidden during more than two centuries, where the Pontiffs offered the Sacred Victim, preached the word of the Gospel, conferred holy orders. These subterraneous caverns were excavated by the Christians to the extent of several miles in length, so that they reach to the sea; in many places large apartments are hollowed out, and the road winds like a labyrinth. They resemble an underground city. Here and there, on each side of the road which traverses them, I observed the sepulchres of the Martyrs, excavated with care, and placed in successive stages in the side wall of earth or rock, each one fitted to contain a single body. In the place which is called the Cemetery of St. Callistus, one hundred and seventy-four thousand Martyrs and Virgins were entombed. The place where Virgins repose is indicated by the figure of a dove, and the tombs of the Martyrs by a palm, engraven upon the sepulchral stone. If I had not seen all this with my own eyes,” adds the pious pilgrim, “I could never have believed in the existence of such a marvel—such great tribulations and such great constancy in the early Christians who excavated these immense caverns with so much pains and care, preparing them, maintaining them in repair,



and making them their abode. Indeed, there can be no reasonable doubt that these catacombs were used, not only to afford burial to the dead, but a safe refuge and place of abode to the living. The Acts of the Martyrs fully prove this fact; amongst others, those Acts of St. Cecilia in which we read that Valerian being sent by her to the holy Pope Urban, to receive baptism from his hand, found him hidden amongst the tombs of the Martyrs. And thus all these Saints and illustrious personages, these first Pontiffs of the Church of Christ, of whom the world was not worthy, dwelt amongst the dead in the dens and caves of the earth, deprived of the light of day; and even in those gloomy hiding-places they were not in safety. . . . Go then, Christians," exclaims the pious traveller in bringing his recital to an end; "go and raise your marble palaces to the clouds; dwell in sumptuous mansions resplendent with purple and gold;—as for me, I prefer to remain in these humble hiding-places, in these dark crypts with the holy Martyrs; and there, in the hope of a glorious resurrection, to live concealed for a little while, hoping to enter with them hereafter into the heavenly tabernacles, and to obtain everlasting possession of a throne of glory."

It would be too tedious to follow in detail, throughout all the centuries which have elapsed since the earliest ages of the Church, the application of the divine plan which was laid down at its very



foundation. In all places and times we shall still behold the realization of the oracle—*Christum oportuit pati*. It was needful that Christ should suffer for the salvation of men. It is needful that His members should suffer also, to co-operate with Him in the work of salvation. What indeed do we find in those apostolic men of all ages who received from God the mission to carry the Gospel light to all the nations of the world, and to bestow upon them the blessings of our holy religion? Invariably, that they appeared to the astonished peoples in the character of victims, quite as fully as in the character of Apostles and Ministers of Jesus Christ.

To quote only a few instances, let us recall the Acts of St. Ignatius of Antioch, that ardent apostle and generous Martyr of Jesus Christ, who sealed the truths which he preached with his blood. He indeed bore testimony to Jesus Christ with his words and with the sacrifice of his life. Burning with love for that dear Master, he met death joyfully for His sake; and calling himself the wheat of Jesus Christ, he went to be ground between the teeth of the lions in the amphitheatre. St. Irenæus, the Apostle of the Gauls, poured forth his blood to fertilize the land which he had previously watered with the sweat of his brow; and at Lyons, the place where he used to offer the Holy Sacrifice, is still venerated in remembrance of that saintly Bishop who himself became a sacrifice and gave his life for his sheep. St. Athana-

sius also, that intrepid defender of the Divinity of Jesus Christ, was assailed by the adherents of the Arian heresy with such bitter hatred and relentless persecution, that, to quote the words of an historian, it appeared as if the whole universe had taken part against him. St. John Chrysostom, again, had to pay dearly for the courage and matchless eloquence with which he stigmatized and condemned the vices of the court of Constantinople, and the cupidity of the Empress Eudoxia. Driven into exile, and compelled to endure incredible hardships, this Saint, honored with the double apostleship of suffering and of the Gospel of truth, endured extraordinary trials, and even in exile converted many souls to the faith of Jesus Christ.

In times more nearly approaching our own, St. Bernard, the glory of France, the messenger of Providence, who exerted such a beneficial and sanctifying influence over his own times, who was employed by God to perform such magnificent works in His Church, was as distinguished in the apostleship of suffering as he was in his tireless labors in our Lord's vineyard. His biographers speak of him as being always ill, and almost always seeming at the point of death. *Corpus tenue et pene mortuum*. St. Francis of Assisi, the "poor man of Jesus Christ," to whom the Church owes a countless host of Saints and apostles, was also a living image of Jesus crucified, by a rare and wondrous grace

receiving in his own body the impression of the Sacred Wounds of our Redeemer. St. Francis Xavier—an apostolic man if ever one deserved that title, who for his zeal and labors was well surnamed the St. Paul of modern times—what did he not undergo in the course of his missions in India and Japan? For the holy Founder of his Order, St. Ignatius, who was also his spiritual father in Jesus Christ, how great must have been his sufferings whilst inaugurating a work which was to give to the Church this unwearied preacher and saintly missionary, and so many others who have succeeded him! And, finally, to recall the illustrious name of a woman who was and will ever remain one of the brightest lights of the Church, as well as of Catholic Spain, who does not know the tribulations which the glorious Virgin of Avila, the seraphic Teresa of Jesus, was strengthened to endure in the course of her glorious career?—a career which enriched the Church with so many monasteries, where the prayers and sacrifice of hundreds of chosen souls, holy and pure victims, apostles of suffering, ascend continually to Heaven, as a holocaust of sweet odor, to appease the wrath of God, provoked by the wickedness of men.

But not to enlarge further upon this part of our subject, we will pass over the innumerable multitude of Saints who, throughout the course of centuries, have borne the blood-stained banner of the *Apostle-*

*ship of Suffering.* These are the crowds of holy Bishops, saintly Priests, fervent Religious and Nuns, and zealous Missionaries who have never ceased to preach the Gospel of Christ, not by their words only, but also by their sufferings, and often by their blood, with which they have freely watered that portion of the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts in which their Master has summoned them to labor. If time and space permitted us to question them all in turn, and to ask them by what secret of divine grace they were enabled to perform such great deeds, and bring forth such worthy fruits in the souls of men, they would doubtless reply with one voice, *In dolore paries*. "In sorrow we have begotten these souls to Jesus Christ." Our labors united to those of our Divine Head, our sufferings and privations joined to His sufferings and death, have, by the aid of divine grace, opened to all these souls the way of salvation. Thus is perpetuated and realized from age to age, in the propagation of the Catholic religion, that sacred plan with which it was inaugurated: *Christum oportuit pati*. It was necessary that Christ should suffer; and it is needful also that all those who desire to labor efficaciously in propagating His saving work, should suffer with Him, even as He has suffered.

## CHAPTER XI.

The preceding Doctrine confirmed by the explanation of the  
Text of St. Paul, "I fill up those things that  
are wanting of the Sufferings of  
Christ in my flesh."

*Colossians, i 24.*

"It must needs be that Christ should suffer."  
. . . And only on the condition of suffering  
with Him here, can we hope to be glorified with  
Him hereafter. The great Apostle St. Paul, who  
pronounced this oracle of God, has presented us  
with its most striking application in his own person  
and in his own life; the true Apostle of Jesus Christ,  
he is also a true victim with Him. As he gloried in  
preaching Jesus Christ crucified, so did he also glory  
in bearing about in his body the marks of the Lord  
Jesus. He goes so far as to say that he "*fills up in  
his own flesh those things which were wanting of the  
sufferings of Christ.*" *Adimpleo ea quæ desunt pas-  
sionum Christi in carne mea.* And he adds further,  
"*For His mystical body, which is the Church*" (Col-  
ossians, i. 24). *Pro corpore ejus quod est Ecclesia.*  
Would it be possible for him to have defined the  
*Apostleship of Suffering* in fewer words, or in a more  
explicit manner? or could he declare more plainly  
that by means of suffering the Christian may labor

for the salvation of souls, and exercise an apostleship most efficacious in the order of our eternal salvation?

For the consolation, no less than for the instruction of all suffering Christians, we will endeavor to place these wonderful words of St. Paul in their fullest and clearest light and we will commence by the explanation of the first part of the text, "*I fill up in my flesh those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ.*" *Adimpleo ea quæ desunt passionum Christi in carne mea.* The meaning of these words is as follows: By suffering in my own flesh, I fill up those things which were wanting in the sufferings which Jesus Christ endured in His flesh. What! you may exclaim, could anything be wanting in the Passion of the Son of God? Were then His sufferings insufficient, and is the Redemption which was the fruit of those sufferings insufficient also? No.

The Passion of the Son of God was all-sufficient; and there is nothing wanting to the greatness or the extent of its value. It was of a price so infinite, that by His Death and Passion our Blessed Redeemer might have ransomed, not only one, but, if necessary, a thousand worlds.

And yet there was, and still is, something wanting in the Passion of our Blessed Saviour as regards ourselves. What then is wanting? It is the communication and participation of His sufferings and merits. It was needful, in fact, that Christ should suffer, not in Himself alone, but also in His mem-



bers,—that is to say, in His Apostles and in the rest of the faithful; and that by that Passion, and by those sufferings, the Church, which is His Body, should be propagated and completed.

Such is the eternal decree which has gone forth. God has determined that His Son should suffer, not in Himself alone, but also in His Body and His Members; that is to say, in the Church and in the faithful, so that by their sufferings, the work of our Blessed Lord should be completed. That is, every one of His faithful servants entering into the participation of the sufferings and Death of Jesus Christ enters into the participation of Jesus Christ Himself, contracting a perfect resemblance to Him, and a most intimate union with Him—the union of the members with their Head, and of the Head with its members. And in this sense it is correct to say that by means of suffering Jesus Christ is consummated in His members. St. Paul was therefore fully justified in exclaiming, *“I fill up in my flesh those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ.”* *Adimpleo ea quæ desunt passionum Christi in carne mea.*

O suffering Christian brethren! what boundless consolation is contained for you in these words! From all eternity, and by the same decree by which He determined that Jesus, His Beloved Son, should become a Man of Sorrows, God the Father decreed also that all His members should suffer, and that

consequently you should suffer with Him. Oh, supereminent dignity! Oh, priceless value of suffering, considered in Jesus our Head, and in the eternal decree which communicates to it a distinction so sublime, and a fruitfulness so wonderful for our own salvation, and the salvation of the human race.

Hear the testimony of St. Augustine to this important doctrine. It is his explanation of that text of St. Paul which has been the subject of our consideration. "Jesus Christ," he remarks, "suffered everything that He was appointed to suffer. When He was hanging upon the Cross, He said '*It is consummated,*' signifying, 'The measure of My sufferings is full. All that was written of Me is now accomplished.' The sufferings of Jesus are then complete? Yes; but only in the Head. The sufferings of Jesus are still to be endured in His Body, in His Members. You are, in truth, the body and the members of Jesus Christ. St. Paul was one of His members, and therefore he says: '*I fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh.*' " \*

After the preceding explanation, it is easy to make the application of this text to the subject under consideration. The learned commentator who has assisted us in discovering the true sense of the first part of this sacred oracle, will also guide us to a correct explanation of the second.

\* St. Augustine, in Psalm lxxxvi.

St. Paul then says that he fills up in his flesh those things that are wanting in the sufferings of his Master. *Adimpleo ea quæ desunt passionum Christi in carne mea.* And he adds further, “*For His Body, which is the Church.*” *Pro corpore ejus quod est Ecclesia.* To explain these last words, there is indeed something wanting in the sufferings of the Son of God for working the conversion of the infidels to the faith, and causing them to participate in the Passion of the Saviour. Now this is precisely the work which is completed and fully accomplished by the Apostles, in suffering all that they have to endure in preaching the Gospel, in order to propagate the Church of Jesus Christ; and this is one meaning of the text of St. Paul. The second is as follows: There were also things wanting in the sufferings of Jesus Christ, in order to apply more fully the benefit of His sufferings and satisfactions to the faithful who were already converted.

Indeed, by each work of satisfaction which is performed by one of the faithful, he applies to himself the satisfaction of the Redeemer, and in this manner satisfies for the temporal penalty due to his sins. But he may also apply for the benefit of others those same sufferings and satisfactions united to those of our Divine Saviour. This is one of the conditions of the Communion of Saints, that communion of good works which exists in the Church. And it is in this sense also that St. Paul accomplished for

the Church those things which were wanting in the sufferings of Christ. He applied the superfluity of his own sufferings and satisfactions to the benefit of the Church, in order that by her means the satisfaction made by Jesus Christ might be applied to the faithful members of the Church, and they might thereby satisfy for their own sins; that is to say, that they might make satisfaction for the temporal punishment which still remains to them to undergo, after they have obtained the pardon of their sins.

We may observe, with several eminent theologians, especially Bellarmine, that these words of St. Paul may also be understood as referring to the treasure of indulgences which is in the keeping of the Church; for it is the will of God that this treasure should be composed, not only of the merits and satisfactions of our Blessed Lord, but also of those gained by the Apostles and all the Saints. By this means it was the intention of God to give honor at the same time to His Son and to the Saints, by causing these latter to enter into fellowship with the Son in the satisfaction made by Him for all mankind. A king confers honor upon his generals by putting them at the head of his provinces, or by giving them a share in the government of his kingdom. Thus God, the great First Cause, honors His creatures, the *second causes* of things, by condescending to associate them with Himself in His work. In the second place, God proposed by this means to

establish a perfect communication of benefits between all the members of the Church,—that is to say, between us and the Saints, a communication which ought to exist between children of the same family. In this manner the Saints really fill up for the Church that which was wanting in the treasure of which we have spoken, and they consequently fill up those things which were wanting in the sufferings of Christ ; because, without these sufferings of the Saints, those which were endured by our Blessed Lord would not have filled up that treasure in the way in which God willed it to be filled up,—that is, by the sufferings and satisfactions of Jesus and the Saints combined.

Let us now sum up this explanation, so encouraging to the suffering Christian. The treasure which it here spoken of is assuredly complete on the side of the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ ; but it is *incomplete* with respect to the merits of the Saints ; and it is this deficiency that St. Paul refers to when he says of himself,—and by implication of the rest of the faithful,—that he supplies it, *fills it up*, by his sufferings.

Such, according to the Commentators, is the proper meaning of this text of the great Apostle : “*I fill up in my flesh those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, for His Body, which is the Church.*”

Let those who are subjected to affliction and suffering, whether of mind or body, ever remember



this consoling explanation. Especially let them lay to heart the still more consoling conclusion which follows from it, namely, that our sufferings, united to those of Jesus, our Divine Head, are endued with a divine efficacy and power—not only for ourselves—but also for others, for whom we may by this means obtain the grace of conversion if they be sinners, and after their conversion the grace to make satisfaction for their sins and to sanctify themselves more and more. Who, then, can fail to esteem suffering, estimated at such a price as this? And who would not willingly consent to suffer for mankind in union with Jesus Christ?

St. Ambrose and St. John Chrysostom tell us that, as Jesus and the Church form mystically but one Body and one life, so the passion of Jesus and the passion of the Church—that is, of the Apostles, Martyrs, and of the Faithful in general—form *one* passion.

It could not, in fact, be otherwise with regard to the sufferings of the Head and of the Body—that is, of the Members; for the Head and the Members suffer together with one and the same suffering and agony; and, as we have before repeated many times, Jesus Christ is the Head, and the Apostles and Faithful are the Members. This is the reason why our Lord, in addressing St. Paul, who was then a persecutor of the infant Church, does not say to him, “Why persecutest thou the Church?” but



“Why persecutest thou *Me*?” For, as Jesus Christ communicates His grace and patience to His Apostles and to the Faithful in general, so does He also communicate to them His sufferings; and as when one member suffers, all the members, but especially the Head, suffer with it, so too, whenever the Faithful suffer, Jesus suffers—has *compassion*—with them. St. Augustine confirms this doctrine when he says, “The sufferings of Jesus Christ and of Christians are common to both, and belong both to Jesus Christ and to the Church.”

## CHAPTER XII.

Essential Conditions of the Deification of our Sufferings; that is to say: How the Union of our Sufferings with Jesus Christ is to be wrought out, in order that they may become divine and efficacious for ourselves and others.

Before proceeding any further, in order to understand the depth of gratitude to God with which our souls should be filled for His great condescension in raising our sufferings to a divine dignity, let us remember that the first and radical cause of suffering is sin. This we are told by St. Paul himself: "*For the wages of sin is death.*" *Stipendia enim peccati mors* (Romans, vi.). Now in this sentence we must understand death to mean not only that final crisis which separates and rends asunder soul and body, but likewise all those sufferings which directly or indirectly herald that final separation. The daily infirmities incident to our nature, that labor of dissolution which pain commences in us, what is all this, inquires St. Gregory, but a kind of death long drawn-out? *Quaedam prolixitas mortis*. Original sin—that is to say, the sin which we contract through our birth from a guilty father—our personal infidelities, these form the principal cause of the sorrows which we

all have to endure. Of its own nature, and making no reference to redemption, suffering is, and can be, nothing but a punishment, a chastisement inflicted upon guilty men. See, then, how deeply we are indebted to the infinite mercy of God—how many acts of thanksgiving we owe Him for having found among the inexhaustible treasures of His mercy the means of converting into a special favor that thing which, through its own nature, was destined to be our perpetual torment and misery. This means is made known to us by St. Paul when he says: "*Behold the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour have appeared amongst us*" (Titus, iii. 4).

When the sun arises after a long and gloomy night, it drives away the shades of darkness, and enlightens the whole earth with its cheering rays. Thus, after the long night of four thousand years which preceded His coming, that Divine Star appeared to which the Apostle refers, and the world was flooded by the rays of its heavenly light, and warmed by its vivifying heat. A marvellous transformation was effected in human nature, and also in the sufferings of humanity which is become Christian in Jesus Christ. Whereas by nature we were "children of wrath," as St. Paul expresses it, we have become "sons of God" by adoption; and whereas our sufferings were formerly the simple instruments of God's righteous justice, they are now become instruments of mercy, and an inexhaustible source of

blessings. Eternal praise and glory be therefore rendered to Jesus Christ, to Whose infinite goodness we owe this amazing benefit. But in proportion to the great price and value of this blessing, should be our anxiety to discover how we may best profit by it, and apply it most fully to ourselves. This we now propose to explain by unfolding the meaning of those words of our Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples: "*I am the Vine; you are the branches.*"

The whole practical economy of the deification of our nature, and consequently of our actions and sufferings also, is to be found in these two short but most expressive sentences: *Ego sum vitis, vos palm-ites.* "*I am the Vine; you are the branches.*" The Vine is Jesus Christ; the branches are each one of us, disciples and members of Jesus Christ. Do we desire that our sufferings should be raised to a divine dignity, be meritorious to ourselves, and salutary for others? There is one only means of effecting this, one condition to fulfil: it is to become united as living branches to Jesus, the True Vine. On this condition we shall receive the divine sap, the divine life; that is to say, the communication of the precious Blood of Jesus Christ, which is as the vital fluid of the tree of life; and with this Blood the divine life of Jesus Christ will abide in us.

We will make some further comment upon this text, which contains in a few words the whole range of the practical doctrine of the divine and supernatural life of a Christian.

Why does our Lord propose to His disciples, and to each one of us in their persons, this most affecting comparison? It is in order to teach us that we must remain steadfast in His faith and love, and never wander from Him. Thus alone can we bring forth fruit, both for ourselves and others. He has various other reasons for comparing Himself to a vine. The first of these reasons is that when He made use of this comparison, He had just instituted the Most Holy Eucharist, in which He had given His own Blood to His Apostles under the *species* of wine, and had left it to all the faithful until the end of the world—that all might drink of it in their turn, and thus by the virtue of that mystic Wine might become inflamed with the love of their Divine Master, and might be enabled courageously to overcome all temptations. The second reason is that the Son of God was on the point of going forth to the Cross and to death, which are so perfectly represented under the figure of the vine and its grapes. Just as when the grape is crushed an exquisite and precious wine wells forth, so from this Lamb of God, pressed in the wine-press of the Cross, that precious Blood poured forth which redeemed the world; and for this reason He has the right to call Himself the True Vine, *Ego sum vitis vera*. For as the vine produces branches and fruit, thus does the Lord Jesus Christ produce by His grace, as by some divine sap, true virtues and faithful men.

Yes, Jesus Christ is the True Vine, as He is the True Light, *Ego sum lux vera*: as He is the True Life, *Ego sum vita*: as He is the True Bread from Heaven, *Panem de cælo verum*. He is the chosen Vine of which the Prophet Isaias speaks as spreading the boughs of faith in all lands, producing vigorous branches and exquisite clusters; that is to say, the glorious troop of Martyrs, Virgins, Confessors, and of all Saints. In fact, after saying, “*I am the Vine*,” He adds, and “*ye are the branches*.” But observe the conditions upon which He communicates the blessing of fruitfulness to the branches; this condition is that they remain united with Him: “*If any man abide in Me, and My words abide in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit*.” The meaning of this is: He that abideth in Me in the same way as I abide in him (not by faith alone, but by faith vivified by charity, so that I in My turn may love him and may fill him with My Spirit), the same shall bring forth much fruit of good works and of merits; and so acquire a continual increase of grace and glory. For, continues our good Teacher, “*Without Me ye can do nothing*”—that is to say, nothing which merits eternal and divine life: *Sine me nihil potestis facere*. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, you cannot bear fruit unless you remain in Me: *Sic et vos, nisi in me manseritis*. And as the branch draws from the vine to which it is united, its life and the sap which enables



it to produce fruit, so do you derive from Me the life of grace to produce those good works which merit eternal life.

From this doctrine it evidently results that it is not from himself, nor from his own natural strength, nor from the external help of *any man whatsoever*, but from the grace imparted to his soul by Jesus Christ, that man derives strength to bring forth good and supernatural works, and consequently that he obtains strength to merit an augmentation of grace and glory. For this reason; that the branch has nothing of itself, but draws all its sap and fertility, all its productive virtue from the vine. St. Cyril, explaining the intimacy of the union which exists between this heavenly Vine and its branches,—that is to say, between Jesus Christ and the Christians who are His members,—says that we become holy and united to our Lord Jesus Christ in two ways: *spiritually*, by faith, hope, and charity; and *corporally*, in the sense that the holy humanity of Jesus Christ is that Vine of which we are the branches, because of the identity of human nature; and that this union is chiefly effected by the Most Holy Eucharist, by which we are united to the Incarnate Son of God, not only as the branch is united to the vine, but as a piece of melted wax is united and made one with another piece of melted wax.

From all these considerations it is easy to conclude that the sole essential and indispensable con-

dition on which alone we can labor and suffer in a divine and supernatural manner—and therefore in a manner which is efficacious for our own salvation and for that of others—is to be united to Jesus Christ as the branch is united to the vine; or, in other words, to be in a state of sanctifying grace which unites the Christian to his Divine Head, not alone by faith and hope, but also by charity. If this condition be wanting, the actions and sufferings of a Christian would be like the worthless fruits which fall from a dry and withered branch. For how would you expect a branch through which the life-giving sap no longer flows, to produce fruits of life, especially of divine life? Our Lord Himself has said this, as we have just seen; and He gives additional confirmation to this teaching in the same passage of the Gospels where He says: “*If a man abideth not in Me (which must be understood of charity accompanying faith), he shall be cast out as a barren and useless branch, and shall wither; and they shall gather him up, and cast him into the fire, and he shall be burned.*” The signification of which is as follows: Just as the withered branch is cut off from the vine, thrown out of the vineyard, then bound up in bundles and cast into the fire; even so the man who abideth not in Me by faith and charity, shall be cast out after death; that is, he shall be separated from the Church and from the company of the faithful, and cut off from the number of the

members of Jesus Christ ; and in that state he will become dried up, deprived of the life-giving sap of divine grace, be taken possession of by the devils, bound up in a bundle with the reprobates, and then be cast into the fire of hell, where he will burn eternally.

But just as the state of the branch cut off from the Vine and withered is deplorable, so is the position of the branch which is closely united to the Vine enviable and glorious. Because the Blessed Virgin Mary was most intimately united to Jesus Christ, the True Vine, she received such a great abundance of grace, and of the divine life, that she has been empowered to distribute to the end of time the treasures of that grace to all the descendants of Adam. This is the Divine Branch (or rather second Vine) which issued from the first, and by whose means all the scattered branches have their union with the divine trunk or stem, which is the Sacred Humanity of her beloved Son. It is to this intimate union of Mary with Jesus that so many sinners are indebted for their conversion, so many just men for their perseverance, so many of the elect for their eternal happiness. It is because they were thus closely united to Jesus, the True Vine, that the Apostles were filled with the Holy Ghost, and consequently with the life of God ; and therefore it was that they conquered so many kingdoms to Jesus Christ, spreading the divine life, and with it the

kingdom of God and of His Divine Son, throughout so many souls. Their sufferings, rendered divine by that sacred union, were no less efficacious than their preaching in bringing the people of the world out of the darkness of error and sin, into the glorious light of evangelical truth. And therefore did they rejoice to suffer shame and contempt for the holy Name of Jesus, Whose sacred doctrine they preached. *Ibant gaudentes, quoniam digni habiti sunt pro nomine Jesu contumeliam pati.* And the one amongst them all who had the most to suffer for that holy Name, the great Apostle St. Paul, takes pleasure in the enumeration of his sufferings, which brought forth such rich fruit for the salvation of the nations to whom he was sent. He says to the Galatians, his spiritual children in Jesus Christ: *Filioli mei, quos iterum parturio donec formetur Christus in vobis*: “My little children, of whom I am in labor again until Christ be formed in you” (Galatians, iv. 19). And he also reveals to them the secret of this mysterious travail, of this Apostolic fruitfulness, when he declares further: *Mihi autem absit gloriari, nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi. Ego enim stigmata Domini Jesu in corpore meo porto.* “God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus (Galatians, vi. 14-17).

To be united to Jesus Christ by charity, as the

branch is joined to the vine, and to be possessed of that purity of intention which gives to all our actions a supernatural aim—this is the secret by which all our sufferings may be raised to a divine dignity; such is the indispensable condition of that divine fruitfulness by which we shall bring forth fruit both for our own benefit and that of others; this alone it is that renders them meritorious to ourselves, and efficacious to promote the salvation of our neighbor.

Let us then unite ourselves to the dispositions of Jesus suffering, more especially to His patience, humility, and ardent charity toward God and man. Let us unite ourselves to the intention of Jesus suffering,—that is, to the object which He proposed to Himself in His sufferings, namely, the glory of God the Father, and the salvation of all mankind. This has been the aim of all the Saints, and by this means they became true apostles to the glory of God and of the salvation of their brethren—through their sufferings. And as the Apostleship of Suffering cannot be exercised with fruit except upon this condition, let us embrace it courageously, and conclude that the more closely we are united by love and sorrow to the Passion of Jesus, the more certainly do we become His apostles through suffering and the Cross.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Practical Conclusions to be drawn from the preceding Chapter.

As Jesus Christ is the Vine, and we are the branches,—since He is our head, and we are His members,—if we desire to participate in His divine life so that it may unfold itself supernaturally in us, even in our smallest actions and our slightest sufferings, we must remain united to Jesus Christ by charity, and associate ourselves with all His dispositions and intentions. Of all the principles of the spiritual life, this is at once the most practical and the most fruitful. It may even be said that it contains in itself all the others; for it is, in fact, the practical application of our incorporation into Jesus Christ, and of its development in us of the fulness of Christ Himself, according to St. Paul: *In mensuram ætatis plenitudinis Christi* (Ephesians, iv. 13). The entire economy of our elevation to a state which is supernatural and divine, consists in the ever-increasing formation of Jesus Christ in us, until it attains that *fulness* or plenitude of which the Apostle speaks in the same passage of his Epistle to the Ephesians. Developing the admirable doctrine of the unity of the members of Jesus Christ amongst themselves, he demonstrates at the same time that the principle and the perfection of that unity resides



in Jesus Christ. He then proceeds to draw practical conclusions which are perfectly appropriate to our purpose. These are the words of the Apostle: "*I therefore, a prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the vocation to which you are called. With all humility and mildness, with patience, supporting one another in charity, careful to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; one body and one spirit, as you are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in us all. But to every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ. And He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and other some evangelists, and other some pastors and doctors, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, until we all meet in the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ*" (Ephesians, iv. 1-13).

"Now, if you desire to attain this measure," writes St. Paul again, "*be renewed in the spirit of your mind*"—that is to say, be renewed by the life-giving virtue of the grace which is communicated to your soul, the regenerating, sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit, "*and put on the new man, who, according to God, is created in justice of holiness and truth.*" That is to say, put on Jesus Christ, Who is the new Adam. "*Wherefore putting away lying, speak ye the*

*truth every man with his neighbor ; for we are members one of another."* "Give not place to the devil, and grieve not the Holy Spirit of God. Be ye kind one to another, merciful, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

We see that the great Apostle is here teaching us what is needful to be understood respecting the practical consequences which flow from our incorporation with Jesus Christ : that is, by the union of our life, actions, and sufferings, to His life, His actions, and His sufferings. The imitation of the virtues of our Divine Head, and particularly of His humility and charity, is the most efficacious means that can possibly be employed to cause this union to bring forth fruit, and to make our sufferings profitable to ourselves and to our brethren.

Let us then draw from all that has been said, the following practical conclusion. Of the three ways of suffering which can be met with, and which in fact are met with, amongst Christians, there is but one worthy of the true disciples of Jesus Christ ; one only which is meritorious and deserving of Heaven ; one only which is capable of contributing to the salvation of souls and of attaining the true virtue of an apostleship. Of these three ways of suffering we may say, the first is infernal ; the second is purely terrestrial ; and the third is both celestial and terrestrial at the same time.

To explain ourselves more fully, we separate

Christians who suffer into three classes. The first is that of bad Christians, for whom suffering is an occasion of blasphemy and of murmuring against the paternal hand of God which is inflicting the chastisement. These so-called Christians, unworthy of the name, suffer *diabolically*—that is to say, like the devils and the damned in hell, with murmurings, insubordination, hatred, and blasphemy. Endured in this manner, their sufferings are not only without merit, but they will become an occasion to them of incalculable evils if they continue in these sinful dispositions of mind. Not only are they useless to their fellow-Christians, but (on account of the closeness of that bond of fellowship which exists between all the members of the Mystical Body of Christ) they are often positively hurtful to them; for they are the cause that the hand of God presses more heavily upon the innocent, who suffer on account of their guilty brethren. Thus those Christians who come under this first category suffer without merit and without consolation; more than this, their pains and tribulations increase in intensity in proportion as their murmurs increase, and this to such an extent that such persons have been often known to hurl themselves over the precipice of despair, and end their lives by suicide. A fearful remedy this for all their woes! For by that final act of revolt against the authority of God, all their sufferings and miseries, which before were bounded by time, have now

become an irremediable and eternal heritage of woe. What can possibly be more sad, more hopelessly miserable than such a manner of enduring affliction, ending in so terrible a result? To suffer in this world, and by our impatient endurance of temporal suffering to deserve eternal suffering in the world to come! Can anything be more terrible? Is not this incomparably the worst of all possible evils? And should not the suffering Christian be willing to make every effort, to resign himself to any sacrifice, rather than run the risk of falling into this terrible condition? Suffering is imposed on man in the same way as his other duties. If we rebel against this inevitable law, we rebel against God Himself who imposes it, and we consequently merit His vengeance. Thus we read in St. Augustine: *Una eademque vis irruens bonos probat, purificat: malos vastat, damnat, exterminat.* The meaning of which is: The chastisement which is inflicted by God upon the just man tries and purifies him; but the same chastisement being inflicted upon the wicked, rouses him to rebellion, and he sinks into eternal ruin and damnation.

Under the second class of Christians are included all those who suffer *stoically* and *indifferently*,—that is, without any supernatural motive, and simply because it is not in their power to escape from suffering. When endured in this manner, suffering can never bring forth fruit unto salvation. For if it be entirely disconnected from all relation-

ship with the supernatural order of things ; if it be exclusively confined to what is human and earthly, how can it ever attain to a supernatural result, or bring forth supernatural fruit, by contributing efficaciously to the eternal salvation of the sufferer? Sufferings are intolerable to the human mind, unless they can be reached by the consolations of Christian hope. Whatever may be the strength of character possessed by the sufferer, it is difficult, or we may almost say impossible, for him to support so heavy a burthen ; and it becomes simply insupportable if it receive any considerable increase. In every case, we must again repeat, suffering so borne is a pure loss to the sufferer, and a loss how irreparable and deplorable ! When a person has been engaged for a long time upon some very laborious undertaking, and when having at length concluded his task, he derives from it no profit or advantage whatsoever, has he not then great excuse for complaint and disappointment ? Now with us, trial, labor, and sorrow, of one kind or another, occupy at least three parts of our life, and in many instances our whole life. If, then, the only result of this long series of grief and trouble is that we have endured it only because we could not help ourselves ; if the only fruit we obtain from all this suffering be the petty satisfaction of vaunting our stoical endurance ; then we have indeed good cause for deep humiliation and distress. This manner of suffering debases a man, because he views



suffering only as a cruel necessity, to whose yoke he is forced most unwillingly to submit. And although by the strength and determination of his character he may frequently succeed in lightening its load for a time, yet is it still a heavy yoke, a shameful bondage, or at least a bondage in which there is no true glory. Do you wish to sink into a state at once so humiliating, and so barren of any spiritual good? No; your faith and your dignity as a Christian revolt alike from a condition so degrading; and, by the grace of God, you are fully determined to suffer amongst those who are included in that third class which it still remains for us to describe.

This category includes those Christians, really worthy of the name, who consider suffering in the light in which every Christian ought always to view it, namely, as a means of expiating their sins, of attaining a closer resemblance to the great Example and Head of the predestinate, Jesus Christ, and thus of meriting eternal life. Under the salutary influence of these supernatural thoughts and motives, such fervent Christians suffer *supernaturally* and *divinely*—with patience, with resignation, and with love, being closely united to Christ, their Crucified Head, and conforming themselves entirely to His intentions and dispositions.

However great and tedious their sufferings may be, never will a word of complaint be heard from their lips; and were you enabled to penetrate into



their inmost heart, you would find there the noblest feelings of great souls, of hearts made like unto the Sacred Heart of our Lord: you would find resignation in suffering—even *love* of suffering. And in many of these chosen souls you would meet with that heroic love which impelled St. Teresa to exclaim amidst her severest sufferings: “Lord Jesus, for Thy love let me suffer or die:” *Pati, aut mori*; that love which caused St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi to cry out: “Lord Jesus, for Thy love I desire to suffer, and not to die:” *Pati, non mori*. Oh! great souls, implore that God Who inflamed your generous hearts with these fervent impulses of love, to breathe the same ardent affections into our hearts, that we also may for the love of God prefer suffering to consolation, and that we may be strengthened to exclaim, with St. Francis Xavier, “More suffering, O Lord! give me yet more suffering!” *Amplius, Domine, amplius*.

But if it is not given us to suffer in this manner, which of all manners is assuredly the most sublime and the most divine, let us at least suffer with true Christian resignation, like the Lamb of God, Who opened not His mouth in complaint even when they were nailing Him to the Cross. To suffer thus is to suffer as a *Christian* in union with Jesus Christ, the Head of all Christians; and if a loving zeal gives life and fruitfulness to our endurance, then indeed we suffer *apostolically*, and we become in good

truth *apostles through suffering*. Then we convert sinners, we obtain the gift of perseverance for the just,—in a word we save souls. And if, by the aid of God's all-powerful grace, we are enabled to love suffering as St. Teresa, St. Magdalen de Pazzi, and St. Francis Xavier loved it, then we shall realize in a degree which is known to God alone, that *Apostleship of Suffering* to which the reader is invited by us with our most earnest powers of persuasion.

In proportion to the number of those generous souls who in this unhappy age will freely offer themselves to God as *victims of sorrow and of love*, in union with the one great Victim of love and sorrow, in proportion to the number of these willing victims will be the hope of the near and glorious triumph of our holy Mother the Church. *Fiat, fiat*. The blood of the Martyrs is the seed of the Church; and the souls who voluntarily offer themselves to suffer for the glory of God, or the good of their fellow-creatures, are truly hidden Martyrs, as was St. Aloysius Gonzaga. Of him it is related that St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, being rapt in an ecstasy, and beholding the great joy and glory to which he was exalted in Heaven, exclaimed: "Yes, Aloysius, son of Ignatius, was indeed a Martyr, a Martyr of Charity."

O adorable Jesus, inspire, we beseech Thee, the hearts of some amongst Thy young and faithful servants with the earnest desire of offering themselves to

Thee as victims of love and suffering for this unhappy generation. Thou alone knowest how precious is the sacrifice of the first-fruits of life, made at a season when so many think of nothing but the gratification of their own passions by sinning against Thee. The offering of first-fruits made under the Old Law was agreeable to God. Thou, Divine Lamb of God, didst know this; and this was why, at Thy first entrance upon this mortal life, Thou didst offer Thyself to Thy Heavenly Father as a tender Victim, and why Thou didst from the earliest moment of Thine existence sacrifice Thyself as a perpetual holocaust for His glory and for our salvation. Blessed for ever be Thy most Holy Name! and may many young and noble hearts, inspired by Thy example, offer themselves with Thee to Thy Heavenly Father, as an offering of a sweet odor, for the salvation of their brethren in these unhappy times, when so many, perverted by the seductions and impiety of the age, go down to eternal ruin!

## CHAPTER XIV.

The Union of our Sufferings with those of Jesus Christ is wrought by the Holy Ghost.

It is much to know that our sufferings can become divine—be *deified*—only in virtue of our union with Jesus Christ. It is yet more to desire and to work out this union. But where shall we obtain this supernatural knowledge of suffering, and whence shall we draw this desire—especially the effective desire of suffering in conformity with Jesus Christ? Assuredly, not the genius of man can here give him light nor his will inspire in him such a desire.

Everything which belongs to the supernatural order is incalculably beyond the energies of human nature, however great we may think them to be. Between the one and the other there will always remain the distance of a measureless abyss—the distance of infinity. If man, therefore, has come to have this knowledge and his soul has soared aloft to such desires, to such supernatural acts, we must conclude that a new Sun has risen to his sight; and that, along with the heavenly rays which enlighten his mind, it communicates to his will and heart its own divine energies and vitality.

What is this wondrous Sun which rises to the

souls of men, to enlighten them and give them life, to give them the divine science of suffering and the strength needed for the supernatural endurance of suffering?

It is the Holy Ghost. Without the Holy Ghost the understanding of man, in all that concerns the supernatural order, remains buried in the darkest night and the will, left powerless, remains inert and without life. This truth has inspired Bossuet with words that may be read in a discourse on the day of Pentecost. With his wonted eloquence he treats of the weakness of our nature and the need it has of the grace of the Holy Spirit, if it is to be secured against its own infirmities.

“Only aspire toward Christian perfection—only follow Jesus Christ a little in the narrow way, and experience will soon make us to know our own weakness. Weary of the obstinate struggling of cupidity within us, we shall confess that all strength is wanting to us unless upheld by the grace of God. After all, it is no merely human work to master this enemy which is within our own household, which is so undying in its persecution of us, which leaves us no moment of truce. Torn asunder within ourselves, we are consumed by our own struggles. The more we think to raise ourselves up by our natural strength, the weaker we become—as some poor dying man who no longer knows which way to turn. Could he but rise he imagines his pain would for a moment

cease; and in the effort, which he has not the strength to undergo, he loses the force still left him. He has managed to drag along his wearied limbs with pain and trouble, only to fall back like a stone, pulseless and motionless, weaker and more powerless than ever. Thus it is with our wills, unaided by divine grace."

Therefore the help of the Holy Ghost is absolutely necessary, if we are ever to overcome the evil inclinations of our nature. But it is far more necessary in order to make us accept suffering with resignation and love in conformity with our crucified God, that is, to raise us as high above our nature as heaven is above the earth.

Hitherto we have brought to mind, one after the other, the great victims of the human race. We have seen the Blood of the Man-God flowing from His open wounds—streams of the Divine mercy issuing forth from the height of Calvary. We have looked on the heroic Mother of Jesus—the second Victim of humanity—standing erect at the foot of the Cross of her Divine Son. There have passed before our eyes Apostles and Martyrs, voluntary victims, in long unbroken train through all the Christian centuries—a blood-red golden chain whose first link is fastened to the Cross on Calvary. All these have given their blood and their life; and, suffering and dying with their Divine Head, they have continued—through Him and with Him—to save the world.



This is the sum of what has been said until now, and it has not yet passed from our memory. But what has not yet been said explicitly is that these Apostles and Martyrs, all these voluntary victims, owe it to the Holy Ghost that they have been lifted so high above themselves and have become the worthy perpetuators of the bloody Sacrifice of the Cross.

The Holy Ghost is the eternal bond of love of the Father and the Son, possessing in Himself the infinite power of union. And it is the Holy Ghost that unites the members to the Head—the Church and each one of the faithful to Jesus Christ—to be made sharers in His divine life. He alone has the secret of that wondrous working by which, as the same Bossuet has said, “He flows down effectively into our souls.” If we may so speak, He sets the Blood of Jesus Christ into circulation in our souls, in order that its virtue may be applied to them. He enlightens them with His own splendors, He enlivens them with His own breathings, He kindles in them His flames of love and gives them divine life by the ineffable communication which He makes to them of Himself and His own divine vitality.

A great Bishop of our day\* has spoken eloquently of this presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church and of the mysterious influence which He exercises over the souls and hearts that are marked

\* Mgr. Berthand of Tulle, France.

with the seal of Baptism. It was just after Pius IX. had defined the Christian faith in regard to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God ; and the learned prelate was publishing to his flock the Apostolic definition of this dogma of our faith.

“The Holy Ghost is in the Church—her infinite soul, at once mighty and sweet. His habitual presence is doubtless made known by continued action : for the Church is always living, and receives therefore without any interruption the divine inspirations. But at certain determined times, she is stirred by a special impulse. According to the burden of her duties and her needs, the Spirit lifts her above herself. In the age of Martyrs, He fills her with stern energy. In the days when dogmas of the faith are to be defined and promulgated, He animates the multitude of the faithful to loving belief. Then a mighty and sweet impulse is given to this vast Church ; all her members are stirred and drawn on toward faith. The word of the dogma goes forth into those spiritual spaces where all awaits it in hope ; and it has not to make its way by violence. It is as the dew on flowers that wait impatiently. But the virtue of faith and mere habits of religion do not work all this without the special concurring aid of the Holy Ghost.”

The eloquent Bishop goes on to explain how the faithful soul draws down upon itself a communi-

cation of the Spirit of God that is more or less plentiful in proportion as its own co-operation is more or less generous.

“Each soul receives these outpourings [of the life with which the Holy Ghost animates the body of the Church] inasmuch as it co-operates with them more or less generously. Sometimes there is more of this grace in some lowly soul than in the powerful ones of the Church. On this depends the inner beauty of the soul ; that is, God always gives those first beginnings which are indispensable, but at the same time He subjects Himself invariably to the law of recompensing fidelity with new gifts. In this order of things, grace is not measured by the laws of the general need ; it is distributed according to the worth of individual acts. It is this which should comfort and elate every member of the body of Christ. There are no harsh obstacles in his way. There is nothing to restrain him in his upward flight. The vast spaces of spiritual progress stretch free and wide before him. He may be perfect, if he only wills to be so ; for exhaustless grace is at his service. The little ones may here become great ; for of this divine life we may have what we will.”

Assuredly, this is consoling teaching. Let us take it to ourselves, to encourage us in having recourse to the Holy Spirit, most of all in our time of pain and trouble. This is the sum of what has been said : His grace is necessary in order that we

may endure sufferings with merit for eternal life ; and this grace, which has been given ready to our hand with an all-divine liberality, will produce these fruits of eternal life in us in proportion to our own free co-operation.

We know what the Apostles were before they received the Holy Ghost—ignorant, rude, timid men. But as soon as they had received the Spirit they became new men, filled with light and loftiness of soul and courage. A little before His Passion, in loving conversation our Lord had said to them : *“I return to Him Who sent Me . . . and, because I have spoken this to you, sorrow hath filled your hearts. But I say to you the truth : it is expedient for you that I go. For, if I go not, the Paraclete [the Spirit] will not come to you ; but, if I go, I will send Him to you.”* This was to say clearly—something essential is still wanting to you, to be My true disciples. You do not yet understand the mystery of My humiliations and My sufferings. You dream only of a temporal kingdom for Myself and for you. In your courage there is heat of the imagination rather than strength of will ; for it is the spirit of this earth that still reigns in you. You have listened to My words, but you have not yet received My Spirit. *“But the Paraclete—the Holy Spirit Whom the Father shall send in My name—He shall teach you all things and bring to your mind all things whatsoever I have said unto you”* (St. John, xiv. xv.).

The holy and solemn day of Pentecost justified these words of the Divine Master by the wondrous change wrought in the Apostles and disciples who were assembled in the Cenacle together with Mary, the Blessed Mother of God.

St. Augustine, in his explanation of this sublime doctrine, calls the Holy Ghost "the soul of the Church," and says: "See what the soul does in the body. It gives life and movement to all the limbs; it sees with the eyes, speaks with the tongue, works with the hands, giving to each bodily organ its own proper activity. It is the same with the Holy Ghost in the Church of God and in the Saints who are the living members of the Church. In these He is the worker of miracles; in those, the teacher of the doctrine of truth; and in others again, the preserver of virginal purity, or of chaste modesty and shame. Each of the members of this mystic body has its own operation, but they all live one life in the bond of charity; and this is the working of the Holy Ghost. This Divine Spirit is in the Church, which is the body of Jesus Christ, what the soul is in the body which it animates; and that which the soul works in all the members of the same body, the Holy Ghost works in the whole Church."

Do we then wish to be apostles of suffering? It is first necessary that the Holy Ghost should become, as it were, the soul of our suffering. That is to say, His divine breath must give it life, He

must unite it with the sufferings of Jesus Christ our Head; and by this union it must become a suffering that makes divine—the suffering of a living member of Jesus Christ, Son of God and Saviour of the world. Without this our suffering will be like that of an amputated limb, no longer receiving life from the body because it is separated from it. Of this St. Augustine speaks: “When some member of the human body is cut off, as the hand or a finger or foot, does the soul follow it? As long as it was with the body, it was alive; but once cut off, it loses all life. Thus a man is a Catholic so long as he lives in the body of the Church; when he is cut off from this body, he becomes a heretic. The Holy Ghost does not follow this amputated member. If then you would live with the life of the Holy Ghost, hold fast to charity, love the truth, desire unity, in order to come to the life of eternity.”\*

The holy Doctor’s aim, in these words, was to show the faithful that they must remain united with the mystic body of Jesus Christ, as members living with His life, if they would have the Holy Ghost present within them. For the Divine Spirit is the soul of this body, and the soul no longer gives life to members separated from the body which it animates. But the holy Doctor also teaches, in express terms, that the Holy Ghost is in the Church not only as the source of unity and life for all her mem-

\* St. Augustine, *Serm. II. in fer. II. Pentecost.*



bers, but likewise as the principle of all movement and activity.

It is a great consolation for us to know that the Holy Ghost not only dwells in us as in His temples, but also has such union with us and such internal workings in us that St. Augustine does not hesitate to compare it to the action of the soul in the body which it animates. This is the direct meaning of his words ; and we may equally well conclude from them that our sufferings, unless they receive life and holiness from the grace of the Holy Ghost, are simply sufferings that are dead and useless. But if the Spirit of God animates them with the life-giving breath of His charity, they become partakers of His divine virtue, they are elevated to the supernatural order, they become meritorious and *deifying*—they make divine.

Let us then have recourse to the Holy Spirit, Who will not only make our sufferings divine, but will also grant us strength and comfort in order that we may endure them with holy joy. Is He not the Paraclete—the *Comforter* ? How touchingly does St. John Chrysostom recount His ineffable workings in our souls, and the numberless blessings that are the consequence.

“ The Holy Ghost is the spiritual perfection of our soul, the sun that shines to the eyes of our spirit, the bond of our union in Christ, the thrilling happiness of souls, the joy of hearts. He is the consola-

tion of those who weep, and the rest of the spirit. By Him prophets are enlightened and kings sealed with the sacred anointing; by Him priests are ordained and the Church sanctified, altars raised and the holy chrism consecrated, waters made pure and demons cast out and the sick healed."

Let us have recourse to the Holy Spirit. He will give us strength and courage in the midst of our combats and trials. "He it is," says St. Bernard, "that gives the strength of life; and what by nature is impossible, becomes possible and easy by grace."

Let us have recourse to the Holy Spirit. He will transform us even as He wrought the transformation of the Apostles. Of them St. Chrysostom speaks: "By the virtue of the Holy Ghost they became fishers of men, towers of strength and firm unshaken columns, leaders and teachers, pilots and pastors of the flock, athletes, strong in the fight, and at the last crowned conquerors."

Let us have recourse to the Holy Ghost. Then we shall know, by sweet experience, the truth of St. Peter Damian's words: "He whom the Spirit of the Divinity animates with His breath of life, shall trample under foot the things of earth and sigh for that which is heavenly and eternal."

Yet let us be careful not to forget the loving warning of the great St. Basil: "In a mirror soiled and tarnished, the images reflected from objects cannot be discerned; so no man can receive the light

of the Holy Ghost unless he cast away sin and the affections of the flesh.”

Last of all, let us remember that when the Holy Ghost came down on the Apostles, the Blessed Mother of God, the Virgin Mary, was in the midst of them. In a way, it was by her means that they received the Divine Spirit. We too desire that the Holy Ghost should descend upon us with the fulness of His gifts. Most of all, we wish Him to pour out plentifully over our sufferings and pains and labors and tribulations that virtue which shall make them divine—meritorious for ourselves and salutary to others. We desire to be true apostles of suffering. Let us then turn to Mary, tenderest-hearted Mother. By the love of her well-beloved Son, may she obtain for us the friendship and favor, the graces and all the gifts, of the Holy Ghost, her Divine Spouse. In union with the holy dispositions of her Immaculate Heart, we will beg her to pray along with us in the beseeching words of St. Augustine to the Holy Spirit :

*“Inspire me, that I may think ever of holy works ; compel me, that I may do them ; draw me, that I may love Thee ; strengthen me, that I may hold Thee ; watch over me, lest I lose Thee.”*

(END OF No. I OR FIRST PART.)



## Second Part.

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THE APOSTOLIC USES OF SUFFERING.





## CHAPTER I.

The Apostleship of Suffering in Families and among the common Faithful.

The excellence and mysterious fruitfulness of the Apostleship of Suffering have been plainly shown by the considerations unfolded in the course of the Chapters of the First Part. It now remains for us to point out in what this Apostleship of Suffering ought to be exercised.

In what field are the Apostles of Suffering to exercise their holy mission?

The field of Catholic zeal is no other than the world itself; and the true Apostle of Suffering includes within the circle of his charitable intentions each soul who has been redeemed by the Blood of Jesus Christ.

But whilst he suffers and endures for the good of men in general, he nevertheless directs the mysterious operation of his sufferings more especially for the benefit of those who are brought under his notice by God's Holy Spirit. He enters, in fact, into the designs of God; and the general harmony which prevails in all God's works makes it necessary that each workman in the vineyard should have his own portion assigned to him, in order that he may concentrate the fulness of his powers on his own particular field and thus act far more efficiently.

And in this manner does the Holy Spirit ordinarily direct those souls to act who let themselves be led by His grace.

As the Divine Spirit breathes His life-giving inspirations into the heart and soul of a Christian, he receives, as it were, a double impulse, and experiences a double operation.

One is a universal impulse of love and zeal for all the members of Jesus Crucified, for all the children of the Church; or, if his heart has become enlarged by frequent contact with the Sacred Heart of Jesus, this may even be extended to the whole of the human race, and expend itself in earnest efforts to bring all back to the service and love of their Creator.

But, besides this universal movement which causes the faithful soul to pour herself forth on the whole world—as if to help and save it by her prayers, her sufferings, and the holy ardor of her charity—there is another impulse, more special, more circumscribed, and restrained within narrower limits, which ordinarily points out to the Christian the peculiar designs of God in his behalf, and the special corner of the vineyard in which he is called upon to labor. This interior impulse is the attraction of grace, the special direction of the Holy Spirit, drawing the soul to the appointed sphere of labor, guiding her in the labor and the culture of that portion of the Mystical Vineyard.

Oh, how important it is that the directors of souls should fully comprehend a truth so practical in the economy of grace, that they may never thwart the Holy Spirit in that work of wondrous unity and multiplicity, whereby He effects the salvation and perfection of the souls of men, breathing "*where He will and as He will*" (St. John, iii. 8). It is through this want of proper comprehension of the working of grace in souls that so many directors place obstacles in God's way and delay in their progress toward perfection many generous hearts who would have reached it; and, further, such directors thus impede the salvation of many sinners, for whom the grace of conversion might have been attained by the efforts of those souls when they had reached the height of sanctity.

To apply this doctrine to our subject, we do not hesitate to affirm that God has appointed to every Christian who suffers in unison with His beloved Son a peculiar field of labor, in which his sufferings will bear fruits of salvation for his own soul and the souls of others. We will proceed to explain this at greater length, and to exhibit the various Apostles of Suffering at those posts of honor in which they have been placed by Divine Providence.

We commence by the Christian family, which represents the Holy Church—that is to say, the great Catholic family, of which it is itself a part.

Unfortunately it is not universally the case that all the members of which the family is composed are *living* members. Frequently it happens, and more especially so in this corrupted and corrupting age, that God meets with enemies in the very bosom of those families in which He might have hoped to find only friends and faithful servants. But it also happens frequently, by a contrast for which we ought to thank the kind Providence of God, that close beside these souls, poisoned by the pestilential breath of sin, appears a sweet and serene figure of suffering personified in an angel of purity and candor, who suffers and prays for those members of the family who neither pray nor suffer for themselves. Ah! who can tell the excellence or the efficacy of that truly divine mission which is daily and hourly accomplished in the retirement of their families by these angels of peace, these innocent victims, whose prayers and sufferings like lightning conductors turn away from the heads of their kindred the bolts of divine justice which were on the point of falling upon them!

The innocent Mary, when she dwelt on earth, accomplished this mission of mercy on behalf of all the human family of which she had already—by her ardent prayers, her incomparable virtue, and her untiring patience—become the Advocate and acceptable Victim before God.

Monica, the mother of St. Augustine, wept at

seeing her beloved son forgetful of her pious lessons, and—like the Prodigal—spending in guilty pleasures the precious years of his youth. But Monica was a Christian mother: she knew that He Who takes account of the gentlest sigh of those who love Him, could never forget the prayers and tears of a poor mother for the conversion of her only son. She prayed, she wept, she suffered, in order to obtain this great grace for her Augustine. With what wondrous liberality her prayer was granted is known to us all; for God not only granted her the grace of her son's conversion, but He chose that son as a vessel of election in which to place the perfume of sweetest virtues and the richest stores of divine science. As a holy Bishop, a most learned Doctor, an incomparable and Catholic genius, Augustine shed so much glory upon the Church by his virtues, his doctrine, and his immortal writings, that the chaste Spouse of Jesus Christ derives from him a new glory, and clothes herself with his merits as with a mantle of honor. Oh, wondrous power of prayer and suffering endured, in union with Jesus Christ for the conversion of sinners, and especially for those who are united to us by the ties of blood!

Christian mothers, Christian wives, who may read this work, keep always in mind Monica, the mother of Augustine. Like that perfect model of Christian mothers and wives, become apostles in the bosom of your families, not by prayers, good advice,



and good example only, but also by your sufferings, your trials, your sorrows, endured with resignation and love. Thus you may obtain the conversion of your husband, who perhaps does not practise his religion, whose life is impious or scandalous; or you may gain the conversion or perseverance of your children who are already corrupted by the poisonous influence of the world, or who are in danger of suffering from its deadly influence. Yes, let all of you become apostles by suffering, especially on behalf of those whom God has united to you by the closest ties of blood; and after them, extend the influence of your apostleship to all the members of your family. And let this be the field of predilection in which you most love to labor. Having conscientiously performed this most important duty, then remember that a Christian's heart should be great as the whole world, and embrace in its charity all the children of the Church, who are our brethren, members of Jesus Christ like ourselves: and all the children of man, our fellows, creatures of God even as we are.

After you have said to our Lord, with the heartfelt impulse of faith and love which conveys your prayer straight to the Sacred Heart: "O my Jesus, deign to accept the sufferings, sorrows, and privations which I endure, for the conversion of my husband, of my children, of my brother or sister or relations, or for their perseverance in well-doing,"



then add, "O my Jesus, accept them also for the needs of the holy Church, my Mother; of the Sovereign Pontiff, who is my Father; of all Christians, who are my brethren, especially for those in this parish; for the perseverance of the just, the conversion of sinners, the salvation of the dying, especially for those who are to die this day; for the deliverance of the souls in Purgatory; for the complete extirpation of all anti-Catholic associations, which seek to do Thee so much evil; for the humiliation of Thine enemies; and, finally, for the conversion of all infidels."

If endured in such a manner as this, and offered to God in union with the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ, your sufferings will attain the necessary conditions of truly apostolic suffering. Suffering in this way and for such an end and object, you will be seconding that double impulse of which we have before spoken, which is given to docile minds by the Holy Spirit; that is to say, an impulse of universal charity and zeal, which inclines the soul to pray and to suffer for the whole Church, for the spiritual necessities of all its members, and even for the whole human race; and another impulse of zeal of a more circumscribed nature, which inclines the soul to pray and suffer in a more special manner for a certain person or a certain class of persons, for some particular need of the Church, and for some one end rather than another.

Oh ! members of Christian families, fathers, mothers, children, brothers, and sisters, accomplish toward each other faithfully this double apostleship of prayer and suffering. And when trouble comes to your home, then stir up your faith and give thanks to God. This adversity, this sickness, this reverse of fortune, this painful separation—behold in each the Cross of Jesus which comes to be set up in your house. This afflicted member of your family, this sick or infirm sufferer—if he is able to unite his infirmity, sickness, or affliction to the sufferings of the Saviour—is then a member of Jesus Christ infirm, sick, afflicted. He is, in a certain way, Jesus Christ Himself, bearing His Cross in the person of this suffering member of His Body.

If, by a miracle worked by the almighty power of God, your house were to be suddenly transformed into the holy mountain of Calvary, and you were permitted to behold your Blessed Lord upon the Cross, His Feet and Hands pierced with nails, His Head crowned with thorns, and His Body covered with bleeding Wounds, oh ! with what respect, compassion, and love would you not contemplate your Saviour suffering and dying for you ! And do you not know that this touching spectacle is, to a certain extent, displayed to you whenever you have under your roof any member of Jesus Christ who is suffering, and suffering as a Christian ? Then does your house become a second Calvary ; the bed of sick-

ness, and more especially the bed of death, becomes a Cross on which the sufferer hangs, and where he becomes an image of Jesus suffering, agonizing, dying. You consider it a blessing to have a Crucifix suspended in your house, in your room, or in your oratory. Ah ! be assured that a suffering Christian who bears his trials, sickness, or infirmity with patience and love, is himself a living Crucifix. His presence alone is sufficient to draw down the blessing of Heaven upon all the members of your household, and to avert the maledictions which might otherwise fall upon it on account of the sins of some of its members.

The venerable Anna Maria Taïgi, whose process of beatification has already been begun by the Church, presented in these latter times an admirable example of this apostleship of suffering in the midst of her family circle. Herself a Christian wife and mother, she fulfilled the various duties of her position with a perfection worthy of being proposed as a model ; but the most admirable part of the character of this “ valiant woman ” was perhaps her invincible patience in suffering, and the great love with which she cheerfully embraced it for the needs of the Church, and of souls in general ; especially, however, for the spiritual and temporal necessities of her own relations, her husband and children above all.

Perhaps some of our readers may like to hear a short summary of the noble life of this truly Christian

woman, which we will abridge from the *Messenger of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*.

“When by a miracle of mercy Anna Maria Taïgi was rescued by Almighty God from the whirlpool of vanity and dissipation in which her early years had been involved, He revealed to her that henceforth she must no longer live for herself, but that she must make an entire sacrifice of herself for the salvation of souls and for the triumph of the Church. From that time forth, in fact, she identified herself with the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ ; she felt all the misfortunes which attacked it far more vividly than her own sorrows ; and she offered herself as a sacrifice to avert those fearful judgments which she knew were on the point of overwhelming Christendom. It was with reference to this apostolic mission that she received the miraculous gift of which we have before spoken.”

[The writer here alludes to the extraordinary gift of prophecy with which Anna Maria was favored, and through which she beheld the course of future events in a Sun that was shown to her supernaturally.]

“ This mysterious Sun, which was a figure of the Divine Light, made known to her events, both prosperous and adverse, which concerned the Church ; and on more than one occasion she was enabled, at the cost of great suffering, to avert, or render less severe, the just punishments of Heaven. God Him-

self exhorted her to offer herself in sacrifice for the salvation of His people, and He took the fulfilment and accomplishment of this sacrifice upon Himself. He kept her hanging upon the Cross throughout the whole of her life. We will now give a slight sketch of her long martyrdom of forty years, as traced for us by her Confessor himself.

“This pious woman continually suffered from violent headaches, which used to increase in intensity on Fridays, especially during the hours of the Passion of our Blessed Lord. Her eyes felt as if they had been pierced with thorns, and it caused her intense pain to expose them to the light of day. She suffered also in her ears from a severe neuralgic pain, which hardly ever left her.

“Besides the continual privations which she imposed upon herself respecting the use of food, she always had a taste of insupportable bitterness in her mouth. Her sense of smell was exposed to suffer from the horrible infection of the sins with which the world is filled, and from this cause alone she underwent intolerable torment. Her feet and hands were affected with violent and acute pains; in fact, her whole body was in a state of continual agony. She was likewise attacked by a great number of different maladies, such as gout, asthma, hernia, and pains in her legs, and this was especially the case during the latter years of her life. The priest who lived in her house assured me that during her overwhelming



attacks of pain he used to go from time to time to inquire how she felt; the answer always was: '*In mortal suffering.*' He would reply: 'Let us do the will of God, and say, *Fiat voluntas tua.*' These words seemed to revive her, and she would answer cheerfully, and with all her remaining strength and energy, '*Sicut in coelo et in terra*—Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.'

"Thus crucified upon her bed of pain, she was, in spite of her own sufferings, the joy and consolation of all who knew her, the source of peace and gladness to all who beheld her, and of renewed courage and ardor to other afflicted persons. She showed an inexpressible charity toward others, and took the deepest interest in their affairs, in the consideration of which she would altogether forget her own sufferings. She was ever tranquil, courageous, cheerful, and resigned in all things to the will of her heavenly Spouse."

To the bodily sufferings which she endured were often added mental trials far more intolerable,—the most fearful temptations of the devil, unjust persecution on the part of men, seasons of actual agony, in which she seemed to be completely abandoned by her God. Anna Maria endured these sufferings joyfully, and added to them many voluntary mortifications, which she practised in order to obtain the triumph of the Church and the conversion of its enemies. She especially directed the efforts of her



zeal and the fervor of her prayers against the infernal activity of those Secret Societies of which the dark and fearful plots had been revealed to her by God.

Her Confessor proceeds :—

“After the return of Pius VII., she beheld in her mysterious Sun the murderous plans which had been conceived by the Secret Societies against Rome in general, and especially against the higher ranks of the clergy. She frequently went to St. Paul’s Church, to pour out her heart before God. At such times more especially did her fervent charity prompt her to intercede by earnest and continual prayer for those unhappy persons, and to offer herself to the Divine Justice as a victim of love and expiation. Therefore, whenever the machinations of the Masonic Lodges were brought to nought, this handmaid of God was afflicted by some agonizing malady, persecution, some great trouble, calumny, or fearful mental trial. This astonishing phenomenon lasted during her whole life. How much is the Church indebted to the prayers and penances of that saintly woman ! How much does the city of Rome in particular owe to her !

“She frequently spoke to the priest who was her confidential adviser of the persecutions which the Church must shortly undergo, and of that unhappy epoch of the Church’s history in which so many men of apparently estimable character would be unmasked.

“ She sometimes inquired of God *who* would be able to resist that fearful trial. The answer she received was: ‘*Those on whom I shall bestow the grace of humility.*’ On this account, Anna Maria established in her family a pious custom of reciting after the evening Rosary, three times, the *Pater, Ave,* and *Gloria Patri*, to the Most Holy Trinity, in order to implore Almighty God, out of His infinite mercy and kindness, to mitigate the severity of the punishment reserved by His justice for those unhappy times. The chastisement which God proposed to inflict upon them had been repeatedly made known to her in the mysterious Sun. It pleased God also to reveal to her that the Church, having passed through various distressing seasons of trial, would finally triumph so gloriously that all mankind would be amazed at it, that *whole nations* would return to the unity of the Roman Church, and that the aspect of the world would be completely changed.”\*

Such was Anna Maria Taïgi, truly a voluntary victim, a chosen offering, well worthy to appear amongst those especial victims of charity whose lives we propose to notice in one of the succeeding Chapters.

We read also of another woman, of Burgos in Spain, who had much to suffer during many years

\* See the Life of this venerable servant of God, in the valuable English series of biographies, edited by Mr. E. H. Thompson.

from her husband, a brutal and irreligious man, who treated her with most unheard-of cruelty, all which she endured with heroic patience. After they had been married forty years, this wicked man received the punishment he richly merited, being attacked with a most severe and painful illness. His pious wife increased her care tenfold, and devoted herself to him. As soon as the sickness was declared to be mortal, she persuaded the sufferer to receive the last Sacraments. When he lost the power of speech, she still remained beside him, to console, exhort, and encourage him in his last hours; nor did she cease her tender performance of every charitable office until his spirit had departed. This holy woman had no cause to repent of her long and patient forbearance, nor of the cares she had expended upon her ungrateful and undeserving husband. For, after his death, St. Teresa was informed by a special revelation that his soul was saved, and she announced to his holy widow that her heroic patience had won the salvation of her husband's soul.

It may be imagined with what transports of joy and thankfulness she received this happy intelligence, and how ardent were her acts of thanksgiving to her adorable Lord. Such, then, is the marvellous efficacy and the divine mission of suffering in the circle of the family.

## CHAPTER II.

The Apostleship of Suffering among the Sick and Infirm,  
and those who are on their Deathbed.

Various passages of this book have given a glimpse of the advantages of sickness and infirmity, if borne with patience, and the powerful virtue of the apostleship which may be found therein. But we wish to say something more for the consolation of so many poor invalids, of so many who are infirm and sick or at death's door, whom our Lord is uniting with His own sacrifice, holding them as it were fast nailed to His own Cross. In this Chapter, accordingly, we shall speak more expressly of the saving apostleship such souls may practise, by enduring sickness and infirmity and accepting their death with resignation, in union with Jesus Christ, for the salvation of souls.

Yes, for you expressly, we write this Chapter, dear souls burdened with infirmity, languishing perhaps for many years in your state of weakness, bed-ridden, powerless, suffering more than you would have done from some sharp illness. You are borne down by your many fatigues or by the advance of years; or, if still young, you are bowed before the time under the weight of premature feebleness. You groan at seeing yourself brought down to forced inaction, against every impulse of your zeal if you

are anxious for the salvation of souls. If you are a religious, you can no longer take your part in the exercises of the common life. If you are a priest, you can no longer devote yourself to the duties of the holy ministry. If you are the father or mother of a family, or in any other condition of life, you can no longer take an active part along with the others in the work and business of your household. But be comforted ; your infirmities and languishing ill-health, the powerlessness that so tries and wearies you, if you only know how to use it, will become in your hands a strong instrument of sanctification for yourself and of salvation for others.

For you then expressly, dear souls, do we write this Chapter—for you whom our Lord has vouchsafed in His mercy to honor with so perfect a resemblance to His own suffering life. It is so long since you have been stretched on a bed of pain. Your bodily strength is broken, you are consumed by fever, in every limb you feel sharp and bitter pains. There is sadness in your soul ; you are troubled at the sight of the affliction of your parents and the friends around you, or at the thought that your business is left in disorder or seriously deranged. Perhaps you have to suffer from being forsaken—from the lack of suitable attention, from the want of patience on the part of those who should care for you, from the poverty and distressed circumstances to which you are reduced. Be comforted at the thought that your

Saviour is here close by your side—that like a tender Father He leans over the pillow whereon your head so vainly seeks for rest. Open your heart to the sweet words of love and pity to which His Heart gives utterance for your encouragement. And remember that by this sickness and pain and affliction, by this lonely abandonment, God wishes to make you *a saint*; and if you will only offer all for the salvation of souls, He will also make of you *an apostle of suffering*.

Last of all, dear souls who are drawing nigh unto death, it is for you also that we have written this Chapter. To you our Lord, with infinite mercy, offers a generous share in the chalice of His own agony. However painful and filled with anguish may be the state in which you are, deem it your happiness to have this last and completest resemblance to Jesus agonizing. Ah, did you but know the feelings of tenderest pity with which the fatherly Heart of our loving Saviour is filled for you! I fear not to say it—there is not a moment of our life wherein our good Jesus shows a greater and more heartfelt care for His children, the members of His Mystical Body, than when He sees them in their death-agony. Then He remembers the great grief of his own agony, and this moves Him to an altogether special pity and love for those of His children who are brought low to the same sad extremity. Cast yourselves then, dear children, with entire con-



fidence into His arms, upon the infinitely merciful Heart of Jesus, your Divine Saviour, Who to save you suffered in the Garden and on the Cross, shedding for you even the last drop of His Blood.

Dear souls, weak and sick unto death, and our beloved brothers in Jesus Christ, to understand the glory you may give to God, the merits you may gain for yourselves, the graces of conversion and salvation you may win for your neighbor, it should be enough for you to recall how by His sufferings and His death Jesus has saved the world ; and how, when you suffer patiently with Him and offer to Him your pains for the salvation of souls, it is Jesus Who still suffers in you and through you continues still to save the world. Is not this thought of itself alone enough to flood your heart with sweetest consolation in the midst of your greatest sufferings? Only bring to mind this sweet foundation-truth of the Christian religion : Jesus Christ is our Head, and by baptism we have become His members. Therefore when a Christian is laid hold of by infirmity and draws near to death, it is a member of Jesus Christ that is infirm, sick, in his death-agony. It is Jesus Christ Who continues in these suffering members of His Mystical Body the infirmities, the sorrows and pains, the agony and all the sufferings of His mortal life and dolorous Passion.

Therefore, too, you may say : My sufferings are the sufferings of Jesus Christ ; and again : The

sufferings of Jesus Christ are my sufferings. Is not this good reason for consolation? If you take the least care to endure and offer your sufferings with this intention, how easy will it not be to help to the salvation of souls by your pains and thus become an apostle of suffering !

St. Paul gives to all of us this encouragement, when he teaches that all our pains and sufferings are but so many sufferings of Jesus Christ. “*For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so also by Christ doth our comfort abound.*” (II. Corinthians, i. 5.)

A little reasoning will show us the worth of the Apostle’s teaching. It will make us understand better the close union between Jesus Christ and ourselves, even though we may be suffering long from infirmity and sickness, from sharp pain and—who knows?—from the soul’s afflictions as well, from sadness and weariness of life, from desolation and fear.

The first reason is that which we have already given. Jesus Christ is our Head, and we are His members ; and head and members together form but one and the same body. Hence the sufferings of the members are the sufferings of the head. When the foot is trodden on, the mouth in the name of the whole head cries out for pain ; yet it is not the head, but the foot which has been trampled on. This is why our Lord, when He spoke to Saul on the way to Damascus, did not say to him : “Why dost thou persecute My disciples?” But what He did say to him

was: "*Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?*" He thus gave him to understand that He and His disciples were but one, and that all persecution aimed at them was aimed at Himself.

There is another reason quite as well fitted to make us understand this touching truth. It is that, when we suffer for the love of Jesus Christ, we make our sufferings His by the offering which we make of them to Him while we endure them. This is the thoughtful saying of St. Ambrose. Again, they are His, because it is He Who sends them to us. Through the designs of His divine and infinitely merciful Providence they come upon us.

A further reason, chosen among many others, is that we could not endure our infirmities and maladies and death-agony in a Christian way except by His aid and through the grace of the Holy Ghost Whom He sends down upon us. It is He Who mingles with our sufferings that supernatural element which gives them their great price, without which they would be useless and of no worth. Truly, we join to this our own personal co-operation; but we are capable of this very personal co-operation only through the help of His grace. For this reason St. Augustine cried unto God: "Lord, crowning our merits, Thou but crownest Thine own gifts." *Coronando merita nostra, coronas dona Tua.*

Finally, Jesus Christ looks upon our sufferings as His, because they are what is left over of His own

sufferings. This is St. Paul's "*filling up*," final completion "*of the sufferings of Christ.*" *Adimpleo ea quae desunt passionum Christi.*

Courage then, brothers weak and sick and in the agonies of death! Courage and confidence! You suffer, it is true; but you suffer not alone. Jesus, loving and worthy of all love, your dear Saviour, your adorable Head, suffers with you and in you, His members and cherished children. And by the close union He has entered into with you, He gives your sufferings a virtue all divine. Say then to Him from the inmost depths of your heart:

"O Jesus my Saviour, most humbly do I bow to Thy most holy will; with love and resignation I accept from Thy fatherly hand infirmity and sickness, and the keen pain and agony which it hath pleased Thee to send upon me. Yet Thou wilt suffer me to send up to Thee Thine own prayer to Thy Heavenly Father, when in Thine Agony in the Garden of Olives Thou didst say to Him: *Father, if Thou wilt, remove this chalice from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done.* O my Jesus, may Thy holy will be done, and not mine. If Thou wishest me to dwell with infirmity, blessed be Thy name. If Thou wishest sickness to weigh on me long and heavily, and pain to try me ever more keenly, still blessed be Thy name. If Thou wishest the sacrifice of my life, I offer it To Thee with all my heart in union with

the offering which Thou madest of Thine own life for love of me. If Thou wishest that I should be healed and live to suffer, or if Thou wishest me to die, alike blessed be Thy holy name. *Sit nomen Domini benedictum.* I offer Thee all my sufferings and the sacrifice of my life for Thy glory, for the expiation of my sins, for the salvation of souls—particularly of the members of my own family—and for the conversion of sinners—particularly in this city or place where I am now suffering for love of Thee. My Jesus, mercy! Thou art my God and my Saviour, and Thou shalt one day be my Judge. I adore Thee and I love Thee. I have a true sorrow for having offended Thee Who art so good and great, so powerful and so worthy of faithful service and love. O Mary, sweet and Immaculate Mother of Jesus, have pity on me, show that thou art also my Mother. *Monstra te esse Matrem.* I beseech thee by the agonizing Heart of Jesus Thy well-beloved Son and by thine own compassionate Heart, pray for me now and in my death-agony—*nunc et in hora mortis nostrae.* Amen. St. Joseph, pray for me. St. Michael, pray for me. My good Angel that guardest me, pray for me. Holy Angel that didst comfort Jesus in His Agony in the Garden, strengthen and aid me. All my holy Patrons, protect me. Amen.”

Thus we may conclude our reflections by saying



to all our dear brethren in Christ, who are infirm and sick and at the point of death : Let it be your chief occupation to keep yourselves united with our Lord Jesus Christ, our Divine Head,—united with His intentions and His dispositions. All depends on the closeness of this union of the members with their Head. Take care in the time of infirmity and pain, and in the anguish of mortal agony, to remain closely united with Jesus weak, suffering, agonizing, dying. Most of all, be closely united with the holy dispositions of humility, submission, meekness, patience, zeal, love, with which Jesus bore all His pains and sufferings. So much the more will you be like unto Him, so much the more glory and consolation will you procure to His loving Heart, so many the more heavenly blessings will you draw down upon yourselves and your families, so much the more powerfully will you help to the salvation of souls, so much the more will you be true *apostles of suffering*.

Ah, did you but know how powerful with the Heart of God is the Christian who from infirmity or sickness, or most of all from the agony of death, offers his sufferings as a true disciple of Jesus crucified, accepting weakness as sickness with resignation, generously making to God the sacrifice of his life for love of Him and the salvation of souls. There is naught which God, great and infinite in goodness as He is in power, is not ready to grant to the prayers—even to the least sigh and groaning—of



this suffering member of His Divine Son Jesus. You have only to recall to mind what He has ever done in behalf of His faithful servants, when like you they were in weakness and sickness or in their last agony.

What great things did He not work for His glory and the salvation of souls through St. Catharine of Sienna, a simple maiden of only a moderate condition in life, whose years scarcely reached to thirty-three. What wonderful power to touch hearts and sway the minds of men was not given to St. Bernard, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Lutgarde, St. Bridget, St. Gertrude—all so many truly living members of Jesus Christ, nailed to His Cross by every kind of tribulation and suffering.

One day the Holy Ghost said these words to the Blessed Angela of Foligno: “I am the Divine Power giving thee such grace and bestowing on thee such virtue that all who shall see thee shall have from their communication with thee some profit for their salvation; and not they alone, but all who shall think of thee or remember thee and even those who shall but hear thy name pronounced.” No wonder that the learned and pious author from whom this is quoted,\* should exclaim: “How much may not a man, closely united with Jesus Christ, help to the salvation of the world, even from the privacy of his room, when all alone, or in the midst of a desert.”

\* Father Saint-Jure, S. J., many of whose works have been translated into English.

And he goes on to quote further from the spiritual writer Blossius, that those who are united with God and give Him full power to work in them as He wishes are very pleasing and dear to Him ; and they do more for the advancement of the Church and the salvation of men in an hour than others—whoever they may be—could do in many years.

“Therefore,” he concludes, “let all our care be to unite ourselves closely with Jesus Christ, to procure and to perfect by every means in our power this sacred union. Let us ask this grace of Him without ceasing, without troubling ourselves about anything else, since everything will be right if we are only one with our Lord. Let us fear nothing and grieve over nothing whatever ; we shall soon become rich and virtuous and perfect by means of this union. *“For it is easy in the eyes of God on a sudden to make a poor man rich.”* (Ecclesiasticus, xi. 23.) And St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, says to us : *“The God of all grace, Who hath called us unto His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little, will Himself perfect you and confirm you and establish you. To Him be glory and empire for ever. Amen.”* (I. Peter, v. 10.)

It is well to put here, at the end of this Chapter, the touching story of the prolonged sufferings and the heroic patience of a poor sick woman who deserves to be proposed as a model to all who are infirm or sick or in their agony, whatever be the

nature of their infirmity or illness, their pains or their agony. For what was there in the way of suffering which this poor invalid had not to endure? We speak of St. Lidwine, who lived in Holland in the fifteenth century. Our readers will allow us to preserve in our story the simplicity of language of the author from whom we borrow it.\*

Human life has so many ills to bear that patience is absolutely needed to enable us to put up with them. For this reason the life of the Virgin Saint Lidwine is a very helpful one. The pains she suffered made her life a vivid picture of a long death-agony; and she gave throughout a rare and singular example of patience and submission to the will of our Lord, by suffering and enduring. . . . God took her in hand to chasten her and to try her by pain and by labors, proposing her to His Church as a perfect model of patience and perseverance in His love.

When she was fifteen years old, one very cold day, she was watching her companions skating on the ice according to the custom in her country. One of them stumbled against her and caused her to fall so heavily that she broke one of the small ribs, which made her suffer terrible pains. So many ills thereupon came one on top of the other, that it seems

\* Ribadineira, *Flowers of the Saints*, 14 April, feast of St. Lidwine, Virgin: unhappily, this Catholic classic is not to be had in an English translation.

incredible that a human body could endure so much, unless the hand of our Lord, Who had sent the suffering, had been with her to preserve her and keep her alive amid so many mortal ailments. The more remedies were applied, the worse she grew. She could hardly use any of her members and was obliged to drag her body around on all fours, on her hands and knees. . . .

She was unable to sleep; and to add to her ills, an abscess was formed in her bowels. . . . She experienced a heat that burned her to the very bone; her arm and right shoulder became dislocated; her head throbbed with pain over the eyebrows and around the forehead, such as no nails could have caused; her eyes, and her teeth and her throat, and nearly all her members, had each its own peculiar suffering. So much blood flowed from her mouth, nose, and ears, and even from her eyes, that every one marvelled. Her lungs were dried up; her liver had decomposed. Yet all of this she bore with extraordinary patience. She was never without a fever; so that there was neither vein nor nerve in her whole body which was not affected and tortured by a pain of its own.

In this kind of life, or rather in this slow and exhausting death, this holy virgin passed thirty-eight years, poor, alone, abandoned and without any one to have recourse to save our Lord, Who afflicted her and Who alone could console her. . . . God

sent to her a venerable priest; He visited her and announced to her the only consolation that would be hers in this life. This she would find in the unceasing meditation of the bitter sufferings which the Son of God endured on the Cross for our sins. He exhorted her, too, to think often on the torments the holy Martyrs had endured for the love of Jesus Christ. He brought her the Blessed Sacrament and in giving It to her said: "Up to this I have exhorted you to meditate unceasingly on the Passion of Jesus Christ; now He is come in person, to visit and overwhelm you with consolation."

The Blessed Lidwine, as she listened to these words, wept tenderly; and her sorely tried heart continued so resolute and so satisfied, that she asked nothing thereafter from God save an increase of her sufferings. A plague was devastating the country. She begged our Lord not to visit His wrath upon His people, who were His children, although sinners, but to chastise her in their stead.

Lidwine's charity was no less great than her patience. Her mother had left to her some few household goods. These she sold and gave the price to the poor. She disposed in the same way of all which devout persons gave her, distributing their alms to those poor people who were ashamed to beg, though she was as needy as any of them.

Margaret Countess of Holland came to see her, and was astonished to find such treasures and



heavenly gifts in the midst of such poverty and abandonment by the world.

Indeed it was a spectacle worthy of admiration to see this woman, so beset on all sides by the pangs of suffering, forgetting and neglecting herself, and at the same time so attentive and watchful for the wants of others. Our Lord more than once showed by miracles how agreeable to Him was her charity.

Lidwine was very humble. Her slightest faults seemed great to her, and she bowed to everybody's judgment, so greatly did she desire to be despised.

She had one companion, an ill-humored person, who used to abuse her roundly and even to spit in her face, without disturbing the holy virgin's serenity in the least. She was asked why she put up with everything from this person. "In order," she answered, "to correct her by being patient; and because persons like her give a chance to acquire virtue to those who lack it. It is, too, in order to keep her from falling into a greater passion."

We must not be surprised that Lidwine, being so greatly favored by God, should have gathered roses from among the thorns, and have found contentment in the midst of pain and suffering. She was in continual relations with her Guardian Angel, with whom she held sweet converse. He appeared to her frequently, to console her by his presence and to raise the clouds of darkness from her afflicted heart. She used to say herself that her heaviest



woes became light and were no longer felt, as soon as she saw her Angel. What then, adds the pious historian very sensibly, what shall be in comparison the vision of God face to face?

Besides her Guardian Angel, many other Angels appeared to her in human shape. She spoke to them, called them by name and knew whose guardians they were. Our Lord Himself favored her with His presence and left on her body the impress of His own Sacred Wounds, in order that she who experienced such grievous torments in her body might feel, in the interior of her soul, the sufferings her beloved Spouse had endured in His Sacred Passion ; and that, by the stigmata in her body, she might become a living representation of the Passion of our Lord.

The death of one of her brothers caused her great grief ; and this sorrow, a little too excessive, made her lose some of the divine consolations. This was revealed to a holy man, who admonished Lidwine of it. After that she bore the death of her brother with greater constancy. From this we see how much our Lord desires His servants to be withdrawn from imperfect and excessive attachments, even so natural ones as regret for the death of a father or a brother.

Our Lord gave her also the gift of prophecy, and laid open before her the secrets of the hearts of those who came to see her, as if she read them in a

book. Many came to seek at her hands a remedy for their ills. Among others, there came a Canon Regular who implored her to ask God to take from him that which displeased the Divine Majesty most in him and was an obstacle in the way of his salvation. This Canon had a very beautiful voice, which was a cause of vainglory to him whenever he sang. The moment Lidwine began her prayer for him he became hoarse and never after sang. Not knowing how he had caught this cold, he underwent treatment for it; but as soon as the doctor learned what had passed between him and Lidwine he said: "If that be the case, neither Hippocrates nor Galen (that is, the doctors) can effect a cure."

She knew the hour of her death, and by way of preparing for it she asked pardon of those around her for whatever offence she might have given them. On Easter eve, our Lord appeared in her room, with His Holy Mother and the choir of Apostles. [Was she not herself an *apostle* of suffering?] Our Lord consoled her and anointed her with a mysterious ointment, the heavenly odor of which remained around her till the morrow. On Easter Tuesday, she asked to be left alone with her little nephew; then, putting herself in prayer, she yielded up her soul to God. Her body was found encircled with a girdle of hair cloth, which afterward was used to expel the demons from the bodies of possessed persons. Revelations were made in several places of

her glory and of the solemnity with which the heavenly Court of the Blessed had welcomed her. Her body, which through life had been deformed and covered with sores, was found whole and most beautiful. Our Lord wrought through her, after her death, many miracles. She died on April 14, 1433, when she was fifty-three years old. Her life was written by Thomas a-Kempis, the author of that precious and well-known book—*the Following or Imitation of Jesus Christ*.

Before closing the story of this beautiful and noble life, let us say a few words, on the filial piety of St. Lidwine toward the Blessed Virgin, that her example may move you, dear souls in infirmity and sickness in agony, to put your chief confidence, after God, in this good Mother whom the Church so fitly calls, Health of the Sick, Consoler of the Afflicted, Help of Christians: *Salus infirmorum, Consolatrix afflictorum, Auxilium Christianorum*.

From her infancy Lidwine's mother had instilled into her a tender devotion to Mary. Accordingly, she never failed to salute Mary's statues and pictures with respect; she paid them frequent visits and laid before them the little objects of which she could dispose. When her mother sent her into the fields to her father or her brothers, she never failed to enter the village church, there to say the *Hail Mary* before our Lady's altar. One day she returned from the fields somewhat later than usual. Her mother,

who had had need of her, began scolding her for it, and said to her: "Where have you been gadding, my daughter?"

"Pardon me this time," was the sweet child's reply, "I went to visit my beautiful Mistress, and she returned my greeting with a smile that made me so happy I could not leave her."

Some years after, on the evening of some festival, the Blessed Lidwine fell into an ecstasy. First, she was led to the foot of this same altar of the Blessed Virgin, whither her feet could no longer carry her on account of her painful infirmities. There she prayed awhile; and then she was carried to Purgatory. There some poor souls were awaiting the help of her charity, to shorten their sufferings. Finally the Angels introduced her into the Assembly of the Saints. She saw the different choirs, and heard their sacred canticles. Some of the Martyrs encouraged her to bear courageously the pains God sent her: "How should not our example," they said, "animate you in this generous strife. See our present condition. What remains with us now of the woes we once bore for Jesus Christ. After having passed through fire and water we have been allotted, in this place of refreshment, perfect peace; and our sufferings have given place to infinite consolations."

Dear and pious Reader, when your charity brings you to the infirm, to the bedside of the sick and the

agonizing, do not fail to encourage them by the motives and examples we have proposed. If without too great fatigue they can listen to these things, read them from time to time some passages from this Chapter, for we have written it for them. To it we pray the Agonizing Heart of Jesus and the Compassionate Heart of Mary to give, with their blessing, a grace of consolation and salvation for each well-beloved suffering brother, and for you, dear Reader, as often as you render them this charitable service. Suggest to them especially the sentiments of the prayers of this Chapter. Invite them to make, from time to time, acts of faith, hope, charity, contrition, humility, submission, and confidence, with the offering of their sufferings and their life for the salvation of souls. Invite them to join you in saying with their whole heart :

“ My God, I adore Thee ; and I believe in Thee, because Thou art Truth itself. I hope in Thee, because Thou art faithful to Thy promises. I love Thee, because Thou art infinitely good ; and for love of Thee I love my neighbor as myself. My God, I regret exceedingly having offended Thee ; pardon me through the merits of my Saviour Jesus, Thy divine Son. My God, I am a poor sinner, be favorable to me, have pity on me. My God, Thy holy will be done. My God, I put all my confidence in Thine Infinite Mercy. My God, I offer Thee the

sacrifice of my sufferings and of my life for the salvation of souls and the conversion of sinners. Lord, into Thy Hands I commend my spirit. Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I love you ; have pity on me, now and at the hour of my death. Agonizing Heart of Jesus, I love Thee ; have mercy on me. Compassionate Heart of Mary, I love thee ; pray for me. St. Michael Archangel, defend me. My holy Guardian Angel, my holy Patrons, pray for me. *Amen.*



### CHAPTER III.

The Apostleship of Suffering amongst Priests and their Congregations.

Although a Priest's chief function is to offer sacrifice, yet the holy Victim Which his consecrated hands daily offer to God, speaks in the clearest tones, saying that he too must offer himself in union with it as a victim for the salvation of the people. And although he is not bound so closely as the Religious to a life of severe mortification, yet it is no less true that his life should be a life of self-sacrifice, and thus should become a kind of continuation of the sacrifice of our Saviour Jesus. The humblest among the faithful, for the simple reason that he too is a member of Jesus Christ, is bound to follow in the steps of Christ to Calvary. How much more strongly, then, must every Priest feel bound to do this, since in his quality of Priest he is expected to bear a more especial resemblance to Jesus Christ, Who is at once Priest and Victim ; and how much more is the Priest obliged to set to the faithful who are confided to his care an example of every virtue, and particularly of that Christian spirit of self-sacrifice which is so strongly recommended to us by our Lord.

Here let us repeat the sacred words: *Christum oportuit pati*—"It behoved Christ to suffer" (St. Luke, xxiv. 46) for the salvation of mankind. And

Christ has suffered, and by virtue of His sufferings every child of Adam may henceforth aspire to eternal life.

Now we have also plainly shown, while speaking of the divine mission of suffering in apostolic men of all ages, that there is not one of them who, in addition to the apostleship of the word and to the other various functions of the apostolic ministry, has not united the apostleship of suffering ; that is to say, they all have fertilized by their sweat and their mortifications, by their sufferings and trials of every kind, that seed of Evangelical truth which they have scattered abroad in the hearts of men. And it was at this price alone, at the price of endless fatigues and countless privations, that these men of God, who were sent by Him to extend the bounds of His vineyard and to cultivate it, were enabled to establish our holy religion in the various countries of the world. Ah ! if the laborer who sows the grain of wheat in the ground cannot hope to see it spring up, until he has himself watered with the sweat of his brow every one of the furrows which he traces with the plough, how much more necessary must it be that the Ministers of that Divine Husbandman, Who—God as He was—was forced to water the barren hearts of men with His own Blood, in order to enable them to bring forth the fruits of eternal life, should in their turn water with their own sweat each of the furrows that they trace in souls, in order that the

seeds of the word of the Gospel committed to their keeping may bring forth fruits of salvation and of life everlasting !

Let us hear the words of St. Paul, that finished model of a holy Bishop, holy Priest, and true Minister of Jesus Christ. In him we behold the *Priest and Victim* united ; in him we may admire the excellent alliance of the burning zeal of the *Apostle of Gospel truth*, and the heroic self-sacrifice of the *Apostle of Suffering*. Who has preached more than St. Paul, or done more in the way of evangelizing the nations ? He has received the peculiar title of *Apostle of the Nations*. Who has ever suffered more than St. Paul—by his labors and tribulations, by persecutions of all kinds ? Who, amongst the Apostolic men of all ages of the world, has offered himself more freely than St. Paul to become a Victim in union with Jesus Crucified, Who was not only the sole subject of his preaching but at the same time the sole object of His imitation ? *Jesum Christum et hunc crucifixum*. But let us hear him relate the sufferings he underwent in order to increase the fruitfulness of his Apostleship and to show himself the Minister of Jesus crucified. *Ministri Christi sunt*, he says, speaking of the other Apostles : . . . *plus ego ; in laboribus plurimis, in carceribus abundantius, in plagis supra modum, in mortibus frequenter. A Judaeis quinquies quadragenas unâ minus accepi. Ter virgis caesus sum, semel lapidatus sum, ter nau-*

*fragium feci. Nocte et die in profundo maris fui. In itineribus saepe, periculis fluminum, periculis latronum, periculis ex genere, periculis ex gentibus, periculis in civitate, periculis in solitudine, periculis in mari, periculis in falsis fratribus. In labore et aerumna, in vigiliis multis, in fame et siti, in jejuniis multis, in frigore et nuditate. Praeter illa quae extrinsecus sunt, instantia mea quotidiana, sollicitudo omnium ecclesiarum.*" (II. Corinthians, xi. 23-28.)

We shall not translate this passage. We speak to the Priests of Jesus Christ; they will understand it. To sum up its contents in one sentence: St. Paul was the *Apostle of Jesus Christ*, but he was at the same time a *Victim with Jesus Christ*; that is to say, he was just as much an *Apostle of Suffering* as an Apostle of the Word and Gospel of Jesus; his whole Apostolic life being like his Divine Master's, a continual crucifixion and continual martyrdom. *Tota vita Christi crux fuit et martyrium.* What a sublime lesson, what a noble example, what a perfect pattern for all of us Priests of Jesus Christ!

Yes, let us be worthy followers of St. Paul, as he also was of Jesus. He himself recommends us to do this in his first Epistle to the Corinthians: *Imitatores mei estote, sicut et ego Christi.* (I. Corinthians, xi. 16.) Yes, O great Apostle, we will indeed follow thee. Assist us to walk in thy generous footsteps, even until death. And as, like thee, we are permitted to enjoy the wondrous honor of ascending

daily to the Altar to offer the Sacred Victim of our salvation, we will prepare for this daily honor by a daily sacrifice, living the life of a true Priest, ever humble, laborious, mortified. Having been called like thee to preach Jesus Crucified to the nations, we will ever like thee bear His Cross in our hearts and in our members, no less than on our lips and in our words. Thus too, like thee, we shall join the preaching of our example to our words, for the edification of the Christian people.

Truly, it is just and right that it should be so. God requires it of us; the sacredness of our character and calling demands it; the success of our ministry depends upon it, and our flocks themselves expect it from us, especially in these times of trouble and calamity, when souls are falling fast into perdition and the priestly office has become almost as much the office of a *Victim* as that of a *Teacher and Offerer of Sacrifice*. *Inter vestibulum et altare plorabunt sacerdotes*. And when has the Priest, the Minister of Jesus Christ, ever had more cause to weep between the porch and the Altar than in the present days?

O Jesus, great High Priest and Victim once offered for the sins of many, Thou hast deigned to associate us with Thyself in Thy priestly office: deign also to associate us with Thyself in Thy Sacrifice.

In spite of our unworthiness, Thou hast deigned



to make us Thy *Priests* : make us also Thy *Victims*. Immolate us with Thyself, as Thou dost daily immolate Thyself for us when offered by our hands in the Holy Mass. May our holocaust, united to Thine, obtain grace for this unhappy generation ! We offer it to Thee for this end : for Thy Glory, for the triumph of Thy Holy Church, our Mother, for the eternal salvation of souls and especially for those who are confided to our care.

Pope St. Clement, in explaining that passage of the Holy Scriptures : *Et iniquitates eorum ipse portabit*,—"He shall bear their iniquities" (Isaias, liii. 11), addresses himself to the shepherds of souls, saying to them : "You are mediators between God and the faithful who are entrusted to your care. You must therefore imitate our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the great Mediator of all : and as He, innocent and spotless, bore our sins upon the Cross, suffering the punishment justly due to our offences, thus also should you consider the sins of your people as your own." Now it is also said of our blessed Saviour in the Prophet Isaias, *Hic peccata nostra portat, et pro nobis dolet*. It is easy from this to draw the conclusion : You, then, shepherds of souls, you also should bear the sins of your people, and should suffer in expiation for them. When the hail is falling upon one field, there is another upon which it does not fall. A holy shepherd who offers himself a victim for his flock, draws upon himself



suffering, crosses and trials, perhaps death itself; but he averts the punishments and the vengeance of God from his people, and especially the punishment of everlasting death.

Monseigneur Affre, the immortal Archbishop of Paris who, like the Good Shepherd, gave his life for his flock, offered himself and died as a Victim on the barricades; and at once the torrent of the outbreak returned to its own place. Blessed is that Priest who cherishes in his inmost heart the desire of self-sacrifice; who never celebrates Mass without offering himself up in union with the Sacred Victim for all the souls committed to his charge—as the pious author of the *Imitation* advises, *Beatus qui se Domino in holocaustum offert quoties celebrat aut communicat.* (IV. x.) But still more blessed is that Priest who, making thus the daily offering of himself with Jesus Christ, puts it also into daily practice and realizes it by a humble and mortified life. In him shall be accomplished the promise of the Holy Spirit as expressed by the Prophet Isaias: “*When He shall make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see a long posterity.*” These words, which in their primary meaning refer to our Lord Jesus Christ—the one Great Offering for the sins of all men—may also be applied in a secondary sense to the Priest who offers himself for his people.

The Priest has a thousand opportunities of realizing this life of self-sacrifice. Not to speak of the

various maladies, infirmities, and other human afflictions which he shares in common with the rest of the children of Adam, and which are so many opportunities sent him by God of exercising his patience, does he not find in the daily exercise of his sacred ministry, if performed with faithfulness, an ample field for abnegation? We need not particularize more than one or two of the offices of his ministry, such as visiting the sick and attending upon the dying at all hours of the day and night. Are there not in the course of these every-day duties continual occasions of a sacrifice often renewed and always full of merit, if he fulfils them perfectly? It is a sacrifice most salutary also to the sick and the dying, who may owe the grace of their conversion at the last and, consequently, of their eternal salvation to a visit from their good Priest, whose generous and devoted zeal will thus be richly rewarded by God. Who knows what might have become of that poor soul if the Priest, yielding to indifference or fatigue or the trouble attending continual visiting, had delayed the accomplishment of this important duty; or if, after once performing it, he had left the sick man to himself, saying: "I have given him the last Sacraments!" Oh! fatal word to many whose illness has been a lingering one, and in whose case the devil profits by the absence of the Priest to dispose the dying person in his own manner!

And is there not also in the duty of preaching

ample occasion for self-sacrifice on the part of the Priest, which may be turned to great account for the salvation of souls? The serious work of preparing a sermon, a retreat, or a catechism, is not this a sacrifice of great utility to those souls in whose favor the sermon is preached or the catechetical instruction given? The generous efforts made by you, zealous Pastors, fervent Priests, to prepare the food of gospel instruction for those children of God who are also your children, are they not so many drops of sweat for which Jesus will give you as many drops of His own Blood, to give fertility to your words and to make them bring forth fruit a hundredfold?

It is well known to every good Priest that the fruit derived by souls from any sermon—all other things being equal—is in exact proportion to the labor which the preacher has expended upon it, to the purity of intention with which it was composed, and to the fervor of the preacher's desire to promote the glory of God and the salvation of his fellow-men. If to this cross of immediate preparation the Priest, as minister of Gospel truth, unites a remote preparation—that is to say, a life of humility and self-abnegation, from his first days in the Seminary up to the present moment—then is his word indeed powerful and penetrating as a two-edged sword. When an apostolic man unites in his own person the power of the Word and the power of the Cross, then is he truly irresistible, then is he fully invested with the

power of Christ. Such was St. Francis Xavier ; and how mighty were the victories wrought by his apostleship !

It was he who exclaimed with that burning zeal which inflamed his apostle's heart : “ Lord, give me souls ; give me more souls ! ” *Da mihi animas.* But it was the same Saint who, at the very time that he was asking God for souls, asked Him for Crosses also : *Amplius, Domine, amplius.* This was indeed a true Apostle, a true Minister of Jesus Christ.

The preacher who proclaims to his people the words of a Crucified Redeemer without bearing the Cross in his own person is not a true preacher of the Gospel. His discourses may be applauded, his eloquence may obtain brilliant success, crowds of admiring hearers may press around his pulpit ; but his influence goes no further. No fruits of conversion, no fruits of grace or of the salvation of souls, are produced by him in souls. If the preacher himself be not a living branch of the tree of life,—that is to say, of the Cross,—what fruit can you expect him to bear unto life eternal ? And yet it was for the express purpose of producing such fruit as this that our Blessed Lord conferred upon him his Apostolic Mission, and said to him as He sent him forth : *Posui vos ut eatis, et fructum afferatis, et fructus vester maneat.*

Woe to the preacher who shall give a false interpretation to his Master's words, and preach himself

instead of preaching, as St. Paul did, Jesus Crucified ! St. Paul says : *Jesum et hunc crucifixum*. The only fruit which such a man can produce in the souls of his hearers is a certain amount of admiration for his talents, but not a particle of the love of Jesus Christ or of His sacred doctrine. We inquire with terror — What, do you think, will be the feelings of this scatterer of fine words when at the last day, before the great tribunal of the Judge of the living and the dead, he shall be thus addressed by our Crucified Lord : “ Whom hast thou preached in thy discourses ? Whom hast thou taken for thy example in thy way of life ? What fruit has thy preaching brought forth in the souls of men ? Thou wast called to preach Jesus Crucified, and thou hast preached thyself ; thou wast called to imitate Jesus Crucified in thy life and conversation, and thou hast fled from My Cross in order to seek in everything thine own wishes and satisfaction. I sent thee to bring forth fruit which should remain unto all eternity ; look now amongst My elect, canst thou recognize *one* as being the fruit of thy preaching ? The fruits which thou hast striven to produce are dried up like thyself. Thou art but a dry and withered branch, worthy to be cast into the fire.”

Woe, a thousand times woe to that Priest, to that preacher of the Gospel, to that pastor and instructor of souls, if at the last day he shall be doomed to hear such terrible words as these from



the lips of the Son of God ! It would have been far better for him never to have received the sacred anointing, but to have remained in the ranks of ordinary Christians. If he had fallen there, his fall would have been at least less striking, and these words of holy Scripture could not have been applicable to his case : *Quomodo cecidisti de coelo, Lucifer, qui mane oriebaris :*

Therefore, my Venerable Brethren, for it is to you that this Chapter is addressed, let us be *Priests* ; but let us at the same time be *Victims* with Jesus Christ ; and when we ascend to the Altar let us imagine that we are ascending the Hill of Calvary ; let us unite our sacrifice to that of the Lamb without spot, and let us say, in His own words to the Father at the commencement of His mortal existence : “ *Here I am, My Father, a willing Offering.* ” *Ecce venio.* Every good Priest, when he considers the overwhelming evils which threaten the Church of God, will understand how timely is this voluntary sacrifice ; and, as St. Paul offered himself a victim for the Philippians, he too will count it joy to offer himself a sacrifice with Jesus Christ for the salvation of souls, especially of those souls which have been committed to his care : *Sed et si immolor supra sacrificium et obsequium fidei vestrae, gaudeo et congratulor omnibus vobis.* (Philip. ii. 17.) Such were the feelings of the great Apostle,—such are and should ever be the feelings of every true Priest of our Lord Jesus Christ.



## CHAPTER IV.

### The Apostleship of Suffering in Religious Congregations and Communities.

Here, above all, we may reasonably expect to meet with the true Apostles of Suffering ; here should this Apostleship—everywhere so fruitful when rightly put to use—bring forth fruit a hundredfold. Religious, in fact, from the very nature of their profession, and especially such as belong to the more austere Orders, are placed in the most advantageous conditions possible for carrying out this Apostleship.

Their vows have placed them in a state of perpetual self-sacrifice which is most pleasing to God, and draws down His special benediction on the world. Indeed, by the three vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience, the Religious becomes, as it were, *crucified*. Those three vows, which oblige to a life of perpetual sacrifice, represent the three nails which fix for ever to the Cross and thus irrevocably unite to the great Victim of Calvary. Through these three substantial religious vows, as through so many voluntary wounds, three rivulets of blood flow forth ; in other words, the whole earthly and sensual life of the Old Man ebbs away and gives place to the life of the New Man, a life wholly supernatural and divine in Jesus Christ.

And if to these three vows of Religion be added

a special vow for the peculiar objects of some special Institute, then this is a fourth nail added to the other three ; and the wound caused by this last is usually the most painful and most deeply felt of any. It is the wound in the heart ; it is, in fact, the means by which self-sacrifice is more closely brought home to the heart. Thus every Religious who has made the three vows of Religion, and still more if he has taken a fourth vow and belongs to one of the austerer Orders, is, by the very fact of his vocation, placed in the category of those Christians whom our Lord has especially chosen to be associated with Him in His office of Victim and in His Sacrifice of Blood. The offering which the Religious makes of himself to God by the vows of Religion, is an offering of such immense value and merit that St. Jerome, St. Cyprian, and St. Bernard call this sacrifice a *second baptism* ; and theologians affirm that it obtains for the offerer a full remission of all his sins.

We must not then be astonished to find that the Saints compare the religious life to a martyrdom. St. Bernard was of this sentiment, and hesitated not to say : “ In truth, this martyrdom is not perhaps so horrible as that in which the body is torn to pieces in torments ; but on account of its long duration it is more agonizing, and harder to endure.”

During the first three centuries of the Church, the special mission of perpetuating the Sacrifice of Calvary was entrusted by the Man-God to the Mar-

tyrs. They shed their blood by thousands for the faith and to procure the application of the merits of His Most Precious Blood to all mankind. Their vows were heard. It was after these legions of noble victims had voluntarily shed their blood for Christ, that His Church issued victorious from the Catacombs and ascended the throne of the Roman Emperors who had been her persecutors, to continue her peaceful reign over the hearts and souls of men to the end of time. But when the Martyrs had performed their part in this sublime mission, Jesus Christ imposed the duty upon other members of His Mystical Body to continue it in their turn. For, as there must ever be upon our altar an *unbloody sacrifice* to perpetuate the presence of the God-Man amongst us, according to His promise, so must there be, until the consummation of all things, certain Christians—living members of Jesus Christ—whose special calling it is to continue His *bloody sacrifice*. And therefore the Son of God, as soon as the persecution ceased, substituted for the Martyrs of the Catacombs the Martyrs of the Religious life, and especially the Martyrs of the Cloisters which may be considered as so many sacred Catacombs. From that very time, in fact, the great monastic institutions took their rise, and from very small beginnings almost imperceptibly assumed the present mighty proportions—the magnificent building or, if you prefer the image, the noble tree of the Religious

Orders so admirable at once in its variety and its unity.

This feeble off-shoot, springing from the tree of life—that is, from Christ Crucified and His bleeding Wounds—was destined to become a great tree which was to overshadow the whole earth and to perpetuate, if we may be permitted so to express ourselves, the office of that sacred Tree on which hung the Victim of Love upon Mount Calvary ; serving in its turn as the Cross upon which innumerable voluntary victims should be crucified in the course of ages with Jesus Christ our Lord. It was, then, at this memorable epoch, when the blood of the Martyrs was yet warm in the amphitheatres, that these martyrs of another type made their first appearance ; martyrs who were appointed to perpetuate the sufferings of their predecessors under another form, and were therefore to perpetuate at the same time the Sacrifice of the Son of God, which the Martyrs of the Catacombs had themselves the office to continue.

From the time of St. Anthony and St. Paul, those illustrious pillars of the solitary life, from the time of those saintly crowds of Anchorites, who peopled the deserts of Egypt and the Thebaid, down to the noble religious foundations of the middle ages and to the more recent Institutes of modern times, reckon if you can the numbers of Religious of both sexes who, during the long course of the Christian centuries, have followed in the steps of Jesus Crucified and have

reproduced in their own persons, by a life of continual labor and mortification, the bleeding semblance of the Son of God, offering themselves in union with His Sacrifice for the salvation of their brethren. Then you will begin to understand how the special designs of God, the execution of which belongs to the general economy of Redemption, have assigned their own duty to the Religious Orders. For the Son of God has been pleased specially to entrust to the members of Religious Orders His own title and office of *Victim*, just as He has willed especially to communicate to the Priests His title and office of *Offerer of Sacrifice*.

In this manner the true Mystic Vine, Jesus Christ our Lord, finds in Himself as in the trunk of some divine tree the life-giving sap which nourishes all the branches that are in union with Him. And thus does He reproduce in every one of these living branches some features of His heavenly likeness and image, some one or other of His divine attributes.

As Jesus is the perfect image of the Father, so should the members of Jesus be perfect images of the Son. The divine life which resides in the Vine must necessarily be distributed amongst the branches. Thus, whilst our Blessed Lord still preserves in Himself the full plenitude of His Divine Life and Office, He nevertheless reproduces Himself entirely in His members. He distributes to every one of them a more or less special participation in His Divine Life,



and to a certain chosen number a special participation in His own Divine Office. It is necessary to make a broad distinction between these two things in Jesus Christ. All Christians, by the mere fact of their being members of the Body of Jesus Christ, participate more or less in His Divine Life; but it is not true that all Christians participate equally in His Divine Office.

The two great Offices which the Son of God came upon earth to perform, and to which all His other functions are subordinate, are those of *Priest* and *Victim*. Priests alone are permitted to have a special participation in His title and office of *Offerer of Sacrifice* for the salvation of the world; Religious are more especially called to share in His title and office of *Victim*. It is doubtless true that every faithful Christian is a member of that chosen people of whom St. Peter speaks as being a royal priesthood—*regale sacerdotium*—and therefore participates to a certain extent in the Priesthood of Jesus Christ. But He does not do this by any special title, like the Catholic Priest who is not merely united by this general bond of connection with the Great High Priest of the New Law, but also by a peculiar title and bond of union which is no other than the *sacerdotal character* and all its high prerogatives. It is the same with respect to the immolation of Jesus Christ, or His office of *Victim*. Every Christian is, or may be, admitted to participate to a certain extent



in this function for the benefit of his brethren ; but all Christians are not admitted to participate in it by the same title as Religious, on whom our Blessed Lord has conferred this mission specially, and we may even say officially : to perpetuate on earth His title and office of Victim for the salvation of the world. It is for this end that our Lord has separated them from the ordinary mass of mankind, uniting them closely to Himself by that peculiar consecration which consists in the triple bond of the vows of Religion, whereby the Religious becomes exclusively *consecrated* to Jesus Crucified and to the interests of His glory.

We do not mean to deny that our Lord also chooses many fervent souls in the world, to be especially associated with Him in His title and office of Victim for the sins of His people. There have always been some of these hidden victims ; and perhaps at the present day there are more than at any former period, whom the Son of God has deigned to associate with Himself in His own sacrifice for the good of His Church and the nations. But, however real and true may be the mission of these holy souls united with the Victim of Calvary for the salvation of the world, this mission is of a private character ; and, except in highly privileged cases, it is usually restricted in the sphere of its influence. But the Religious is, by the very fact of his profession (including as it does consecration to a life of per-

petual sacrifice), publicly and officially invested with the title and office of Victim and set apart to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Incarnate Son of God. Their vows and all the observances of their rule supply Religious with an endless succession of means of the greatest efficacy to accomplish perfectly this great mission according to the measure of the grace given unto them; and of this they daily receive an abundant supply.

Even their very dress exhorts them continually to self-sacrifice, reminding them unceasingly that they no longer belong to this world but to Jesus Christ alone. In this spirit did their founders conceive their holy Institute. One of these saintly men, as we see in the abridged formula of the Constitutions of his Order, formally declared that all his Religious should be ‘men crucified to the world and to whom the world was crucified.’ *Homines mundo crucifixos, et quibus mundus sit crucifixus*. Is it surprising that the Religious who faithfully corresponds to the grace of his vocation, everything else being equal, should be usually more ready than another to second the merciful designs of his Lord in that path of sacrifice wherein every Religious is bound to take up his Cross and follow Christ?

We may conclude this Chapter by observing that each Religious Institute participates more or less largely, according to its especial object and the greater or less austerity of its rule, in the expiatory

mission of the Son of God made Man—in His title and office of Victim offered for the salvation of the world. Some religious bodies are founded for the purpose of exercising the evangelical ministry amongst the people, or for the instruction of children or care of the sick. Others again devote themselves especially to the continual practice of prayer, austerities, and the severest penance. These several Orders find in the discharge of their laborious duties, in the faithful performance of their vows and rules, an unceasing series of opportunities for sacrifices of greater or less extent; and they are consequently enabled to participate more or less fully in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and in His office of Victim. And finally, if we meet with some Institute which makes a particular profession and special vow of self-immolation and daily suffering for the salvation of souls, then the Religious who belong to this Institute, if they be faithful to their vocation, have in God's sight and in a high degree the title of Victim and a large share in the great work of sacrificing themselves in union with Jesus Christ for the salvation of all men.

We may then conclude that the vocation of Religious of both sexes, to whatever Order they belong in the Church, is a truly excellent and divine vocation, because it so intimately associates them with Jesus Christ in the very exercise of His Bloody Sacrifice; that is to say, in His offering of Himself

upon Calvary for the salvation of the whole human race. We may conclude that, as the grace of their vocation is so distinguished, they should be proportionately faithful in corresponding to it by leading a life of strict purity and humility, a life of mortification and great love of the Cross. The more precious the gifts which God bestows upon the soul, the more strict will be the account which must one day be rendered of them before the Sovereign Judge. Amidst the wondrous favors with which we are surrounded by the infinite liberality of our Heavenly Father in the Religious life, let us never forget that solemn maxim of St. Gregory, or rather the words of our Blessed Lord Himself of which St. Gregory's are only an explanation: "*From him to whom more is given, more shall be required.*" *Cui plus datum est, plus repetetur ab eo.*

## CHAPTER V.

The Apostleship of Suffering in Religious Communities of the purely Contemplative Orders.

The Apostleship of Suffering should be held in honor in all religious houses in general. And it should be especially esteemed in those which are peculiarly and almost exclusively devoted to the exercises of prayer and suffering for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. We allude more particularly to those religious bodies which are devoted by their vows to the contemplative life, such as Trappists, Carmelites, Poor Clares, the nuns of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus, etc.

But let us begin nearer the fountain-head, and explain the immense services which these religious bodies are called upon to render to the Church and to souls by their prayers and sacrifices united to the sufferings and prayers of Jesus Christ.

The spirit of modern times is a spirit opposed to everything that is Catholic and supernatural, or divine ; and it pursues all the Religious Orders with hatred and contempt. But it is especially opposed to those which devote themselves to the exercises of the contemplative life. It strives to get rid of them at any cost, considering them a useless and unhealthy growth in the social body. Alas ! even amongst Catholics we may meet with some who are possessed

with these fatal prejudices, and who presume to say : “What is the use of these Religious Orders? and, above all, what can possibly be the good of these cloisters, where they shut themselves up to lead a useless life at a time when every arm should be free for action, when so many sick people require to be nursed, so many poor to be relieved, so many bad Christians to be converted, so many infidels to be brought to a knowledge of the truth?”

Ah! it is doubtless true, there is much to be done in the world for the bodies and souls of men, far more probably than you are aware of. But is not this an additional reason why no possible means should be left untried by which we may bring some help to the innumerable necessities of the age in which we live, when souls are being lost on every side and the powers of evil are leading the people astray with such frightful ease? And who (unless, indeed, they are prepared to renounce the very first principles of the Faith) will dare to dispute the fact that *prayer and sacrifice* are among the most powerful means which God has bestowed upon His creatures to lead erring souls to return to Him? Our Divine Redeemer never once separated these two things. He did not spend His whole life in preaching; but He never interrupted His exercise of prayer and sacrifice for the salvation of the human race. Always a *Suppliant*, He realized in His own Person the precept which fell from His Divine Lips : “*We ought*



*always to pray, and not to faint."* *Oportet semper orare, et non deficere.* Ever a *Victim*, He fulfilled the type of the perpetual sacrifice in use amongst the Hebrews, which was a symbol of that perpetual holocaust He was Himself to offer to the Father for our Redemption.

The mortal life of Jesus Christ upon earth was, as we have already observed with the pious author of the *Imitation*, "*a perpetual Cross and Martyrdom.*" St. Augustine expresses the same idea in other words, when he says: "Jesus Christ did not wait until the last few days of His life to commence the work of reparation for our sins. He began it in His very cradle." And the reason which the holy Doctor assigns for this conduct of our Lord is in itself a renewed testimony in favor of the Apostleship of Suffering. "It was not fitting," he writes, "that the Saviour of the World should one moment remain in the world without performing the duties of His office." On His side, the Apostle Paul informs us that it was necessary that the Son of God should suffer, in order to merit the name of Saviour and save His people from their sins. Therefore, the same Apostle proceeds, when Jesus Christ came into the world, He offered Himself in sacrifice, saying: "Father, since the blood of goats and bulls hath no power to satisfy Thy justice, behold Me, sacrifice Me." *Ecce venio.*

Thus, out of the three-and-thirty years of His

mortal life, our Blessed Lord devoted *three* to the *preaching* of His Gospel; and *thirty-three*, that is to say, His *whole life*, to *prayer* and *suffering* for our salvation. Will any one dare to say that He could have employed those thirty-three years better in the exercises of the active life, considering that there were then, as now, poor to relieve, slaves to be set free, heathens without number to convert?

He who was wise with a wisdom not of the pretended wise men of the world, judged it fit and better to act otherwise, and so the world was saved.

After His death, our Divine Redeemer remains faithful to His original plan. He will not make the application of the merits of His Precious Blood to His people by any other method than that which He employed for their Redemption. He has entrusted His Church with the twofold mission of perpetuating His Divine Apostleship, and of gathering in its fruits; and thus it has become necessary that the Church should reproduce, in her own proportion, that triple element which was employed by Him in the work of our regeneration; namely, *Prayer*, *Teaching*, and *Blood-shedding*. And the Church faithfully follows the example of her Divine Author. While she devotes herself with indefatigable perseverance to the instruction of the people by the preaching of the Gospel, she still lays the greatest stress upon Prayer and Sacrifice for procuring the

salvation of souls. As far as she can, she will accomplish the precept of continual Prayer and perpetual Sacrifice by the daily offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which is at once a holocaust and a prayer daily presented to God by thousands of Priests, in uninterrupted succession. For at all hours of the day and night, in thousands of places throughout the world, Altars are prepared for Mass and before these Altars Priests are standing; and upon them, in priestly hands, the Sacred Victim is praying and sacrificing Himself even as on the Cross, suffering a mystic death, shedding upon His people the Blood which cries more loudly than the blood of Abel. And observe that, as Jesus Christ, the Divine Head of the Church, requires His members—that is, all Christians—to perpetuate with Him His life of supplication by uniting themselves to His Eucharistic prayer; so does He also require these same Christians to perpetuate His life of suffering, and consequently His Sacrifice, by uniting their sufferings to His own and filling them with the life-giving power of His Eucharistic Sacrifice. And it is thus that the Son of God gives daily and hourly and every moment—to His Church and to each one of her members—the call to continual prayer and to continual sacrifice; associating in His own Prayer and Sacrifice both His ministers and His people.

And therefore it is that, when the Catholic Priest ascends the Altar for the purpose of offer-

ing to God the Father the Blood and Prayer of the Lamb of God, before offering the Sacred Victim he must pray and after he has made the oblation he must not cease to pray; and the faithful who are present at the Holy Sacrifice must in their turn pray with the Priest, who prays in and through Jesus Christ. So that Holy Mass is at once both the great Sacrifice and the great Prayer of Jesus Christ and of His Church—in Him and through Him—and of His Priests and the faithful, the children of His Church. We need not mention the various other acts of public and private worship, which are a species of extension of the Eucharistic prayer, to which they all belong as to a common centre, and which, even when departing from it, ever remain in union with it as the rays of light go forth from the sun.

What conclusions must we then draw from this consideration? First, that in the designs of Christ and His Church prayer enters, and must ever enter, largely into the work of a Christian's regeneration, as well as into the maintenance and development of his supernatural life. Secondly, that those Religious bodies which are especially consecrated to prayer and devote to it a considerable portion of the hours of every day, are institutions perfectly in harmony with the great plan of our regeneration as traced out and realized by Jesus Christ Himself. Thirdly, that we may hope as much for the good of the Church and the salvation of souls from these Institutes whose

especial profession is *prayer*, as from those which make a particular profession of *works*.

To this consideration succeeds another, which is no less worthy of our attention. It is that our Blessed Lord requires His members, not only to perpetuate His Prayer throughout all the ages of the world, by praying in their turn with Him; but also to continue, and, according to St. Paul, to *fill up*, His Passion by actually suffering with Him. Thus, it is not sufficient that the faithful take part in the sufferings of Jesus Christ in the manner we have just described, namely, by their presence during the Unbloody Sacrifice of the Most Holy Eucharist, by their union with the ends of this Sacrifice and by their application of its virtue to themselves. If they confine themselves to this kind of participation in His sufferings, can they venture to say that they perpetuate in their own persons, by their own real and actual sufferings, the Passion of the Son of God? It is, nevertheless, by their own personal sufferings endured in union with Jesus Christ that the Bloody Sacrifice of Calvary must be continued and completed by them.

Now we would ask, is not our Divine Master's intention of perpetuating His life of suffering in His members continually frustrated and neglected in a great majority of cases, especially when it becomes a question of suffering for the salvation of others? Set aside the number, so sadly great, of Christians

who are in mortal sin—in whom our Lord in no way perpetuates His Sacrifice because, while they remain in this state, they are no longer living members of His Body. Set aside also the great mass of Christians who, though not actually in a state of mortal sin, accept their sufferings only because it is not in their power to escape from them, that is, under constraint, and without any supernatural intention. And whom have we now remaining?

Two classes of the faithful, living members of Jesus Christ, who perpetuate, at least for their own sake, the Sacrifice of their Divine Head.

The first class is composed of Christians who are animated with a true spirit of faith. Whether in the world or in Religion, they accept the sufferings which are laid upon them by God in a spirit of patient resignation. But they do not attain to the more generous feelings of those saintly and fervent souls who suffer, not with submission only, but with self-devotion, in order to give pleasure to God and to His beloved Son Jesus. It is quite evident that, although our Blessed Lord does perpetuate His Sacrifice in this class of Christians, He does it in a very imperfect manner. For they never think of turning their sufferings to the good of their fellow-creatures, by enduring them with an apostolic intention to obtain for others the graces of conversion and salvation.

The second class embraces those fervent Christ-



ians who, in the world or in Religion, are burning with the fire of Divine Love. So far from contenting themselves with suffering in a simple spirit of resignation and for their own benefit, they rise up to the purest spirit of love and self-devotedness, esteeming themselves happy in being permitted with the Apostles to suffer humiliation for the Holy Name of Jesus and thus win souls to Him. Such a one was St. Paul, that ardent disciple of the Cross who exclaimed with an impulse of the Divine Love which inflamed his ardent soul—“*God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*”—*Absit mihi gloriari nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi*—St. Paul, who would have willingly consented to save his brethren by becoming anathema in their stead—*Cupiebam anathema esse a fratribus meis*. Such were the Saints in all ages. They trod in the footsteps of the great Apostle, and sighed eagerly to share in the Cross and humiliation of their Lord. Such are still to be found amongst the few generous souls animated with the noble sentiments which in all ages have inspired the true friends of God. They count it all joy to endure suffering and humiliation with Jesus and for Jesus, esteeming themselves happy if, at this price, they can gain Him souls.

The pious reader will agree with us that the proportion of these fervent souls is very small. How then will the Lord Jesus fill up this void and per-

petuate His Bloody Sacrifice worthily, as He designs? He will do so in the following manner. He will separate from the common mass of Christians two classes of the faithful, His living members, and will make them in a peculiar manner the perpetuators of His Sacrifice; and by these two classes I mean Priests and Religious who, by the very fact of their sacerdotal character or their religious profession, are placed under an especial obligation to persevere in a life of greater sanctity, mortification, and retirement from all worldly pleasures. Thus too they enjoy the most favorable conditions for perpetuating suitably our Blessed Lord's life of suffering and immolation. Nevertheless, it is upon Religious that this mission more especially devolves—upon those Religious in particular who are devoted, by their rule and Institute, to a life of penance and self-immolation.

We need not here repeat what has been said in a preceding Chapter with respect to the Apostleship of Suffering amongst Priests, and the powerful motives they have for exercising it. We shall content ourselves with pointing out the difference which exists in this respect between Priests and Religious. It evidently proves that to these last is more directly and officially entrusted the great mission of perpetuating in their own persons the Bloody Sacrifice offered by the Lamb of God for the salvation of man, just as to the Priests of the Church has been

confided the mission of perpetuating His Unbloody Sacrifice upon the Eucharistic Altar.

The first and essential office of the sacerdotal order is that of *Sacrificing Priests*. It is only because of this title that the Priest is more closely bound than any other Christian to associate himself with the sufferings and Bloody Sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ by a life of peculiar sanctity and mortification. But he is not bound to this in the same degree as the Religious. And therefore a Priest's life is not subject, like that of a Religious, to the various observances, privations, penances, and continual austerities, which convert the life of a Religious into a perpetual round of self-sacrifice. The Priest, unlike the Religious, has taken no vow of poverty; he is consequently permitted to enjoy his own possessions and to allow himself certain comforts and pleasures which are forbidden to the Religious, provided that he does not pass beyond the bounds set by his duty and his dignity. The Priest has promised obedience to his Bishop; but this is a promise of very simple meaning and easy execution, compared to the Vow of Obedience pronounced by the Religious, which binds him to perpetual abnegation of his own will in what are often most difficult acts.

It is needless to pursue the comparison further. We have said quite enough to show that the Priest, by the very nature of his office and the sacred char-

acter which he bears, is bound to perpetuate in his own person, in a more perfect manner than the rest of the faithful, the suffering life of our Saviour; and that the Religious is bound, in virtue of his religious profession, to perpetuate the same life of suffering still more perfectly than the Priest. On the Religious has the title and office of *Victim* been conferred in an official and solemn manner—as upon the Priest, in virtue of holy Ordination, has been officially and solemnly conferred the title and office of *Sacrificing Priest*.

Nevertheless, we must not fail to place in the first ranks amongst those Religious to whom the office of victim has been especially confided the members of the more severe Religious Orders, particularly those which are specially destined to the exercises of prayer and self-sacrifice.

In the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, just as in the natural body of man, there exists a double movement, a double expression of life: one being visible and exterior, the other interior and hidden. The object of both is the same; namely, to cause the Blood of the Redeemer, and consequently His Divine life, to circulate throughout the whole body of the Church. Both have their principle of motion in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, whence they spring and flow forth as a majestic river from its fountain-head. Two channels are closely united to that sacred source, in which the living waters of grace

are contained. One of these is visible; it is the *Sacerdotal body*, or the members of the Priesthood. They are entrusted by Jesus Christ with the charge of His doctrine and the merits of His Most Precious Blood, receiving at the same time authority and mission to transmit the precious charge to mankind by the preaching of the Word of God and the administration of the Sacraments. The other is invisible; it consists of the holy souls to whom Jesus is closely united by love and sorrow. Of these He makes use as so many instruments of His mercy—especially in those cases in which, for various reasons, the ordinary ministry of Priests is difficult or unattainable. For the office of these apostles of love and suffering consists principally in *assisting* the ministry of the Priest and *supplying*, to a certain extent, its place when it is unavoidably absent; that is to say, when for any reason whatever it cannot be exercised.

The Blessed Virgin Mary is the greatest of these Apostles of Suffering. To such a height of dignity had she attained that she even deserved the title of Queen of Apostles, *Regina Apostolorum*. Ah! was not this because she not only assisted in the formation of the new-born Church by her example and advice, but also offered herself as a sacrifice for souls? With ardent love, daily did she offer for them upon the altar of her Immaculate Heart a spotless victim; that is to say, the oblation of her



fervent prayers, her saintly labors, her tears, her maternal grief—in one word, the offering of her blood and life in union with her Divine Son Jesus. Is it surprising that by these means she should have co-operated in the salvation and perfection of many souls?

Now we do not hesitate to assert that religious persons of either sex who devote themselves to the exercises of the contemplative life, in an Order which is especially dedicated to the continual practice of suffering and prayer, largely realize the secret mission which was confided to the Mother of God—that *interior Apostleship* which is so intimately connected with the *exterior Apostleship* exercised by Priests. It is from amongst their ranks that our Blessed Lord delights to choose those *special victims* of whom we are shortly to speak; or rather each one amongst them is one of these chosen victims.

The illustrious foundress of the Carmelites, the Seraphic Teresa, understood the life of sacrifice, to which she had devoted herself, precisely in this manner. It was she who observed to her daughters, at sight of the evils laying waste the Church: “O my daughters in Jesus Christ, help me in beseeching our Blessed Lord to vouchsafe a remedy for these fearful evils! It is for this purpose I have gathered you together in this house; this is the object of our vocation; this is what we ought, without ceasing, to ask of God.” It was to this end and the salvation



of souls, that she desired them to direct all their austerities, fastings, watchings—in a word, their whole life of self-immolation. And to encourage them in this difficult path, she went before them in the way and devoted herself to every kind of self-sacrifice, repeating the words which she had chosen for her motto: “To suffer or to die.” *Pati aut mori.*

## CHAPTER VI.

Practical Considerations drawn from the two preceding Chapters.

We have now clearly established the reality of what we may call the *expiatory mission* of the Religious Orders—above all, of those which make it their special profession to *pray* and to *suffer* for the salvation of souls. From these considerations, which are peculiarly appropriate to our own times, we proceed to draw the following conclusions.

*First Conclusion.*—The Son of God has saved the world by the Cross, and desires to employ the same means for making application of the virtue of the Cross to men: it follows that, just in proportion to the number of Christians who are found in any age of the world united by suffering to the sufferings of Jesus in order to further the salvation of their brethren, so will be the solid hope of salvation for that age.

Now we have already proved that Religious have received from God the *special mission* of perpetuating in their own persons the sufferings and Passion of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the more Religious there are, in any age, charged with this mission and faithful in its accomplishment, the greater will be the hope of salvation for that generation. More-

over, these Religious share more perfectly in the expiatory mission of the Son of God in proportion to the austerity of the Orders to which they belong—especially if those Orders make it their peculiar profession to pray and to suffer for the salvation of souls. It follows that the more we find of such faithful Religious in any given age and kingdom, the greater hope we may reasonably entertain of the salvation of that kingdom or generation, and the more confidently may the Church expect an approaching triumph and an abundance of spiritual blessings.

*Second.*—In proportion as any Catholic nation has provoked the wrath of God by the crimes of its children, so much the more necessary and urgent is the duty of that nation to multiply in its bosom such asylums of *prayer* and *penance*; by which we mean those Religious Communities where particular profession is made of *praying* and *suffering*. For the same reason, the more a country is sullied by the vices of its inhabitants, the more a diocese has of irreligious persons, bad Christians, anti-Catholic associations, so much the more reason is there to labor to restore a healthful atmosphere to that country or diocese by introducing into it these health-giving plants, sprung from the Blood of Jesus, which shed so sweet an odor of life and purity around them. There, above all places, is it of importance to establish those institutions to which certain Bishops, not long since, very aptly gave the

name of *lightning conductors*; for they avert from the guilty heads of sinners the thunderbolts of Divine justice ready to overwhelm them.

In proof of this, we may quote the following judicious remark from a Catholic journal respecting the salutary influence of Convents and other Religious Institutions in Germany: "It is these souls," it says, referring to Religious, "who have saved *by their supplications and works of mercy* States led by their impious masters to the very brink of ruin. They have averted the chastisement of God from cities that had incurred the Divine wrath. Voluntary holocausts, they have made reparation by their privations and austerities for the evil-doings of those very persons who deride and despise them. They have prayed and suffered and labored for the benefit of a people regardless of its duty; and the result demonstrates the truth of those words of the Apostle, *Caritas omnia sperat*, '*Charity hopeth all things.*'" And we may add that in our days, in Germany, it has obtained all things. The writer alludes to that great movement toward Catholicism which has taken place in Germany, under the influence of the Religious communities. We might make the same observation with reference to the not less remarkable movement which is going on in England, and which yearly produces so many conversions to the Catholic Faith. And in France also, amid the many causes of scandal which unhappily arise,

what help do we not receive from those Religious Institutions which the country contains in such numbers ! Happy would the country be if it understood the truth, that these institutions are and ever will be an unfailing source of health and prosperity to the land !

*Third.*—We must not be surprised when we see impious persons of our own days, like those in former times, attack Religious Congregations with the bitterest aversion, and strive by every possible means to bring them into discredit, to hinder the full development of their undertakings, and even, if it lay in their power, to exterminate them altogether. But we cannot help feeling great astonishment when we hear certain Catholics, who in this particular are either very blind or very ill-intentioned, echo these unjust and hateful declamations. Such conduct implies either a deplorable weakening of their sense of the supernatural, or a great ignorance of the designs of Providence respecting the general economy of the work of Redemption ; or else, which is still more to be lamented, a spirit of ill-will that is almost inconceivable, because directed against God more than against man. It opposes a serious obstacle to the salvation of souls for whom our Lord Jesus Christ has shed all His Blood.

It is impossible that any one should doubt—unless he voluntarily closes his eyes to the plain evidence of facts—that the various Religious bodies,

in spite of the infirmities which are inherent in human nature, have always rendered, and still continue to render, very great services to the Church. How does it then happen that many persons, who are certainly far from being the enemies of the Son of God, are nevertheless numbered in the ranks of the adversaries of these faithful and devoted servants of His? And this at a time when the work begun by our Blessed Lord is surrounded by so many enemies, and the precious souls whom He redeemed with His own Blood are exposed to so many dangers, to such imminent risk of falling into eternal perdition!

Alas! these imprudent Christians impede the application of the Blood of Christ to the souls of men by His chosen instruments. Do not they fear lest it fall back upon them as a curse at the last great day, when every man shall receive the reward of the good in which he has had a share, or the chastisement of the evil that he has caused?

*Fourth.*—It follows that Priests, who have the direction of consciences, far from discouraging such persons as may confide to them their desire of embracing the Religious Life, should on the contrary encourage this inclination, provided that after careful examination they are satisfied the vocation comes from God. Let them even, if they can, give help in carrying out the design. Let them be assured that in this manner they will render a signal service, not only to the souls whom our Lord calls



to solitude, but also to the whole Catholic Church. For these persons, sanctified in the cloister or elsewhere, would give to the Church the powerful support of their prayers, austerities, sufferings, and unwearied devotedness.

Never was it more timely and necessary than in the present day to favor this holy impulse of souls moved by the Holy Spirit to devote themselves to a life of prayer and sacrifice for the salvation of their brethren. Is not the generation in which we live a cold and indifferent generation, unwilling either to suffer or to pray? Is it not urgently necessary, if we hope to save it from sinking still deeper into the abyss of darkness and corruption, that pure and ardent souls should stand between it and God by their prayers, to avert the punishment with which it is threatened and to obtain for it mercy and pardon? Yes, this need of prayer and expiation is daily felt more deeply. It is our duty, as directors of consciences, to second to the utmost of our power this impulse of the Holy Spirit.

But let us take care not to substitute, under any pretext whatsoever, our own inclination for the movement of the Holy Spirit. This sometimes happens when a Director is animated by human motives, or even by the prejudices of the age in which he lives. Thus he may easily give a direction to the mind of his penitent which is not in accordance with the operations of Divine grace upon the

soul. In this way a Director may oppose the designs of Providence with regard to a soul, thus doing a great injury to the individual, and also to many others who might have been greatly assisted by that person in the place which God had designed. Directors of this kind should be said to *misdirect* rather than *direct*, to lead astray rather than spiritually guide the consciences of those under their charge. The responsibility which they assume by a line of conduct so completely opposed to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is certainly very ill-calculated to reassure their minds with respect to the account which they must one day render to God of the souls He has placed under their care.

To a certain extent we apply what we have said to those fathers and mothers of families who oppose, without good reason, the ecclesiastical or religious vocation of their children. Through an inordinate affection, which is often a cloak for pure selfishness, they place an insurmountable barrier between them and the Religious Life. Let such be assured that by acting in this manner they are guilty of a very great injustice both toward God and their children; and that they will one day be called upon to render a strict account of their conduct to the Sovereign Judge. I pass over the domestic chastisements and troubles which conduct so unworthy of a Christian is sure to bring, even in this life, upon themselves and their families.

*Fifth.*—It follows that members of Religious Orders should consider themselves victims offered in sacrifice to God the Father, in union with His Divine Son suffering and dying for the salvation of the world. Just in proportion as they conform themselves to the life of Jesus Crucified, will they reach the more perfectly the sublime end of their vocation. In such times as these, when the spirit of independence and unbridled love of material pleasure are eating like a cancer into the very heart of modern society, it is more necessary than ever, in order to oppose some counterpoise to the prevailing evil, that the members of Religious communities should become thoroughly imbued with this spirit of self-sacrifice, by the practice of profound humility, perfect obedience, and thorough mortification. It is our firm conviction that one of the points upon which all the Superiors of Religious communities are most bound to insist in our day and which they should by every means instil into the mind of their subjects, is the *spirit of sacrifice*, the *love of the Cross*, in union with Jesus Crucified and for the salvation of souls redeemed at the price of His most precious Blood, of which so many, alas! are daily sinking into perdition.

*Sixth.*—Hence, all those Religious whose vocation leads them to active ministry, such as preaching, instructing the young, visiting the poor and sick, ought to apply themselves so much the more

earnestly to this life of self-sacrifice as they are more exposed to lose it on account of the distractions inseparable from their employments.

In fact, every Religious, whatever the nature of his occupation may be, is, as we have before observed, by the very fact of his religious profession officially set aside and deputed to perpetuate the sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon earth by becoming a *victim*, associated with that Divine Victim Who offered Himself on Calvary for the sins of the world. And the founders of these Orders have conceived their Rules in no other spirit than this. One of them, in particular, inserted in the formula of the religious vows which are taken by his children the word *holocaust*, which he implores our Lord graciously to accept in an *odor of sweetness*. *Ut hoc holocaustum in odorem suavitatis admittere digneris*. Here is the complete idea of *sacrifice*, expressed with so much clearness and precision that it is quite impossible to mistake its meaning.

*Seventh.*—Finally, Religious belonging to austere Orders in which profession is more especially made of praying and suffering for the salvation of souls, ought to esteem themselves very happy and highly honored in being thus called to follow Jesus Christ more closely in the royal road of the Cross ; to perpetuate in an especial manner His life of prayer and immolation ; to be more closely associated than any others in His title and divine office of *Victim*

slain for the salvation of the world. You may well rejoice and encourage yourselves in those trials which are inseparable from the life of self-sacrifice, by reflecting that there is nothing in the whole world which our Heavenly Father contemplates with so much satisfaction as the living images of His Crucified Son.

And are you not of the number, are you not in a peculiar manner the suffering members of Jesus Christ? Your poverty, your nakedness, your privations, fasts, and austerities, your vigils and daily and nightly prayers, your humiliations and obedience, do not these things liken each one of you, as long as you are faithful to your rule, to Jesus Crucified? Take courage, then, generous victims; you have "*chosen the better part, which shall not be taken away from you.*" Your place is prepared for you in heaven amongst the princes of heavenly glory: *Ut collocet eum cum principibus, cum principibus populi sui.* To you whom the world curses as a barren field, or as a withered branch which is good for nothing but to be cast into the fire, to you the gift of fruitfulness is promised, even the fruitfulness of souls; a gift a thousand times more precious than that which perpetuates the race of the Old Adam upon earth. For by your fervent prayers, your daily and hourly sacrifices, your ardent charity, your intimate union with the chaste Spouse of souls, you will multiply the family of the Second Adam, even



our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ. You will rejoice His Spouse the holy Church, and people Heaven with the elect.

Love, then, these sacred cloisters, these blessed solitudes, where, as of old, our Lord Jesus still delights to come to seek shelter from the tumults of the world. Hide yourselves with Him in this mysterious desert; unite your prayer with His prayer, your fasts with His fasts, your combats with His combats; above all unite your heart most closely to His Divine Heart, Which asks for nothing but to be loved in return for the immense love which He bears toward us. Yes, let us love with our whole hearts the loving Heart of Jesus. Let It become, with God the Father and the Holy Ghost, the sole Object of our adoration, praise, and love, in time and in eternity. After Jesus, let Mary His august Mother be the chief object of our veneration and of our most tender and devoted love in heaven and on earth. *Amen.*



## CHAPTER VII.

### Of Special Victims.

Jesus Christ is the Divine Head of His Mystical Body the Church; and still in a way He prolongs and perpetuates His personal existence in every one of His members under some one of the characteristic traits of His life on earth. In the ordinary Christian, He continues His private, or as we may say, His *domestic life* at Nazareth. In the Priest, He continues His public career of preaching, and His peculiar *sacrificial office*. In the Religious, He continues His life and office as *Victim*.

From Himself as the Divine Tree, the sacred Vine, the life of Christ is communicated as a fertilizing stream through three great branches, closely united together. These, branching out in their turn, convey the divine life of Christ to the last and least offshoot of that mysterious tree. The first branch is the life of Christ continued in the faithful; it is the Christian life: *vita Christiana*. The second is the life of Christ as a Doctor and a Priest, continued in Priests; this is the *sacerdotal* life: *vita sacerdotalis*. The third branch is the life of Christ as an obedient and crucified Victim, continued in the Religious; this is the Religious life: *vita religiosa*.

The Son of God came down from heaven to

earth that He might give us divine life, and give it to us more abundantly. In His own words: *Ut vitam habeant et abundantius habeant*. And truly, since His appearance upon earth, the divine life of Christ overflows into the bosom of successive generations of Christians, producing abundant fruits of virtue and holiness unto everlasting life. Praise and thanksgiving be rendered to our sweet and loving Saviour!

We may add, in order to complete this instruction, that whilst for purposes of His own God maintains that triple distinction of which we have just been speaking, He also frequently makes choice of *special victims*, gathered from amongst all ranks of Christian society. He communicates to them, for the salvation of their brethren, a large share in the sufferings of His Divine Son, and in the title and office of *Victim* borne by that Son.

In glancing over the annals of the Church, it will be easy to meet with many instances in proof of this assertion. God has at all times made choice of fervent souls to make of them victims well-pleasing in His eyes. On them He delights to pour out those vials of His wrath which were justly due to some city or nation, or even to His Church herself on account of the unfaithfulness of her children. In this manner He formerly let loose upon the innocent Victim of Calvary, His own well-beloved Son, the chastisements due to the guilty race of man. It would

be impossible to describe the tender affection, the love of preference, felt by God the Father for those souls to whom He imparts such special features of resemblance to Jesus Crucified. There is no miracle or grace that He is not ready to grant in answer to their prayers, especially when they present their petitions to Him in union with the tears, the blood, and the agony of Jesus, added to their own sufferings and tears.

It is more especially in times of great social and religious disturbance that our Lord in His mercy is accustomed to raise up these hidden victims. Their latent action, like that of grace in our souls, joins in the work of God's mercy in a most vital and intimate manner. We may compare the important function which these holy souls accomplish in the living members of the Mystical Body of Christ to those vital organs in the human frame which are connected with the heart, from which they transmit the blood which is the life of the body to the remotest members. We will not say that these holy souls are like a kind of *living sacrament*, by which Jesus Christ effects a work of divine life in His members; but we do declare that they are His instruments—channels directly united by suffering and love to the Fountain of that Divine Life. From the Sacred Heart of Jesus they obtain His life for all those of His members whom He destines to profit by their means.

Hence it appears that in proportion as a soul is closely united by suffering and love to the Fountain of Life which is Jesus Christ, in the same proportion is it in a position to draw more largely from that overflowing fount of Divine Life for itself and for others. And it becomes peculiarly apt to perpetuate the Sacrifice of Jesus upon earth, to be associated in His title and office of Victim for the salvation of men. Moreover, it has in consequence freedom of access to God and power over the Sacred Heart of His Son, to obtain abundant graces for the just and for sinners, for the Church, for the Sovereign Pontiff, for nations, dioceses, parishes, families, for the conversion of infidels,—in short, for all the needs of the Church and of the whole human race.

At the head of these hidden victims appears Mary, the Mother of Jesus and our Mother, in whom love and sorrow unite and twine together like flowers blooming amidst thorns, forming a mystic unity under the double title and glory of “Mother of fair love,” *Mater pulchrae dilectionis*, and “Queen of Martyrs,” *Regina Martyrum*. Mary suffered by compassion all the pain and sorrow of Jesus. By her love she corresponded perfectly to His love, so that Mary’s union with Jesus by love and sorrow was perfect and wrought in fullest measure. We cannot, then, be surprised at finding her influence over the Heart of her Son so great that she has drawn from It streams of divine life for all mankind, insomuch that

all the graces which are poured forth from the Sacred Heart of Jesus into the Heart of Mary come finally to us through her Virginal Heart, as through a pure and fertilizing channel.

The office of this great and noble victim—of her who is only second to the Divine Victim of Calvary—is thus an operation not only efficacious, but universal ; for it extends to every Christian, to all men, all places, and all times. Yes, it is to Mary, Mother of sorrow and of love, that the whole race of man is indebted, after Jesus, for its salvation. We cannot then wonder to find her placed at the head of that sacred band of *special victims* of whom we are now speaking. This is perhaps the cause of that particular attraction which leads many people to choose Our Lady of Sorrows and her compassionate Heart as the special object of their devotion.

The office of St. Joseph cannot be separated from that of Mary his august spouse. We must not separate him from her in the share she had of the sufferings of Jesus her Divine Son. St. Joseph was great among these voluntary victims, but he was a hidden victim. God the Father associated him, by a work of co-operation, with the great work of the Redemption and regeneration of the human race. How would it be possible for him not to have had a share in the chief means of atonement and redemption? But this was suffering, the Cross, the voluntary sacrifice of the Man-God.



Next to Mary and St. Joseph, St. John the Evangelist occupies the first rank in this band of generous souls. The love shown by Jesus to this disciple, beloved of His Heart, was so tender, so ardent, so intimate, that He could not fail to bestow upon him the special grace of a perfect resemblance to Himself. It is the characteristic of affection, when carried to a high degree, to aim unweariedly at reproducing the living image or even the very life itself of the person who loves in the object of his love. How could Jesus, Who loved St. John so tenderly, fail to engrave in him the very image of His own crucified life? How could He refuse him the gift which He accords to His most beloved friends as a pledge of His affection, namely, an abundant share in the chalice of His Agony, and the sufferings of His Passion? As St. John was the beloved disciple of Jesus, so he was Mary's favorite child; and for long years he was the trusted depositary of all the sorrows of her most saintly soul. Thus he could not have failed to participate in her martyrdom of love and grief with his own soul so loving and sensitive. Yes, we believe that St. John the Evangelist was one of those *special victims* whom God the Father is pleased to associate intimately in the sufferings, and especially in the interior sufferings, of His beloved Son. In the life of the Blessed Angela di Foligno we find the following passage, which bears on our subject. "I had prayed," says the Saint, "to the



Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and to St. John the Evangelist, that by the intense grief which pierced through their souls in beholding the Passion of Jesus Christ, they would obtain for me grace to feel all the sufferings of that holy Passion. Accordingly, St. John pierced my soul with such an exceeding bitter pain that I had never felt anything so severe; and I then knew that the sword of grief which pierced through the virginal heart of the holy Mother of God and of St. John the Evangelist was far sharper than any of the martyrs' sufferings, and that they suffered at the foot of the Cross torments greater than any martyrdom."

This is the testimony of a soul favored with the special communications of the Holy Spirit. The reader will not be surprised if we endeavor to confirm him in the persuasion which we have ourselves, namely, that St. John the Evangelist is second only to Mary in the ranks of those hidden martyrs in whose hearts the Cross is planted by Jesus Christ Himself. These He associates with Himself in His title and office of Victim. He chooses them to perpetuate His sacrifice for the salvation of the world by making them share in His sufferings, especially in the inmost sorrows of His holy Soul and His agonizing Heart. We think it right to advise such souls as are being led through the path of tribulation and sorrow, to have recourse with confidence to the protection of St. John, the beloved disciple of the ago-

nizing Heart of Jesus and the favorite child of the compassionate Heart of Mary. There exists, indeed, not only between the members of Jesus Christ, but also between their various offices, a certain intimate relationship which attaches them closely one to another. This causes in them a mutual dependence, forming an order full of harmony and beauty. St. John occupies a place of honor in this mysterious hierarchy. He thus exercises upon all those who are placed below him a visible influence of love and protecting care.

Let us consider Mary Magdalene, that favored soul who became so dear to the Heart of her Divine Master when her own heart overflowed in tears of repentance and burning love. Was not she also one of these chosen victims of love?

The Son of God poured into her penitent heart His richest gifts of pardon and grace, to convert her into an instrument of mercy by which He would attract numberless converted sinners. Eighteen centuries have rolled by since the day when she knelt, bathed in tears, at the foot of the Cross, with Mary and the Beloved Disciple. But has a single day passed in which the remembrance of her history, her name, her prayers, her example, her tears, her long penance, have not exerted a salutary influence over some prodigal soul? Has she not exercised a true apostleship of mercy and conversion? She was the chosen instrument in the hand of God to bring

down the healing dew of grace upon the land of Gaul? It was owing to her powerful intervention with God, added to the labors of the saintly men who succeeded each other in the task of its evangelization, that this dry and barren land became "the Most Christian Kingdom, the eldest daughter of the Church," that land of France ever dear to God and ever generous. To-day, tried and afflicted, its afflictions will diminish from the moment that devoted souls shall offer themselves to God, like Magdalene, as victims for its deliverance.

Who indeed can tell the marvellous power of love and sorrow in souls which are closely united to the very Fountain of grace, even the Sacred Heart of Jesus? Who can describe the holy influences which flow from a heart made divine by contact with the Heart of the Man-God? Its influence can be bounded only by the limits of its sorrow and its love. According to its love and its suffering through love will be the extent of its action and the efficacy of its work in that mysterious world of souls, in the region of the supernatural in its relationship with our poor humanity. No, the branches of the sturdiest tree derive not from the trunk sap to quicken them into life so completely as one of these souls obtains heavenly life for itself and others from that Divine Body to which it is united, from Jesus Christ the Tree of Life, the true Vine Which brings forth Its fruit unto eternal life. *Ego sum vitis, vos palmites.*

We believe most certainly that Mary Magdalene was one of these fruitful branches, united most closely to the Divine Tree. Rooted with Him in the soil of Calvary, she drank in the divine life abundantly and distributed it in turn to an innumerable multitude of lesser branches. These forevermore owe to her, after God, the grace that they remained not amongst the number of dry and withered branches, fit only to be cast into the fire.

Thus, from the foot of the Cross, or rather from the very Wounds of Jesus Crucified, have arisen three great branches, which are united to Him by suffering and love.

The first, on which the other two depend, is the Blessed Virgin, the most loving and compassionate Mother of Jesus. By reason of the excellence and intimacy of her union with her Divine Son and of her conformity to Him in His sufferings and love, she is placed at the very fountain-head of grace. She receives the divine life in such abundance that she is filled with the fulness of all graces, and dispenses them in turn to the children of men throughout all generations. It was thus that the most holy Virgin, at the foot of the Cross, was constituted *Queen of the Apostles of Suffering*.

After Mary and through her, two other branches spring from the Tree of Life—St. John and St. Mary Magdalene. Their love and compassion for their Crucified Master cause them to resemble Him so

nearly and perfectly that, next to the Blessed Virgin, they deserve to occupy the highest rank amongst the Apostles of Suffering. In reward for their love and devotion, an important mission has been confided to each. To St. John was entrusted the task of converting the city of Ephesus and the countries of the East, by his charity and sufferings, no less than by his preaching. To Mary Magdalene, who became known as the penitent in her dwelling-place at Sainte Baume in Provence, was entrusted the mission of preaching Jesus Christ in the countries of the West by her tears, her prayers, her voluntary expiations, and, more than all these, by the sacred ardors of her love. Marseilles especially is indebted to her, as well as to her brother Lazarus, and her sister Martha, for its happy conversion from paganism and for becoming what it now is, one of the most thoroughly Catholic cities in the whole world.

Thus it is on Calvary, at the foot of the Cross, that the *Apostleship of Suffering* was first inaugurated in the person of Mary, Mother of Jesus, and through her in the persons of St. John and St. Mary Magdalene. This is indeed a glorious origin ! Will not every Christian be inspired with a holy jealousy to obtain a share, according to his ability, in so sublime a work, especially in these evil times, when it is more than ever necessary to increase the numbers of such Christians as are ready and willing to devote their own lives for the salvation of their brethren ?



## CHAPTER VIII.

### Examples.

We now proceed to adduce certain examples in confirmation of the doctrine which has been advanced in the preceding Chapter. They will show how the Son of God has been pleased in all times to associate with Himself in His sacrifice certain special victims, for the needs of the Church and the conversion of the souls redeemed at the price of His Blood. As our space is limited, we shall confine ourselves to a few of the most striking amongst these examples.

We have already mentioned St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, that seraphic soul burning with love of Jesus Christ and devoured by zeal for the salvation of souls. In her life we read the following words : “ The Lord gave her to understand that it was His good pleasure that she should obtain permission from her Superiors to fast during several years upon bread and water, Sundays alone excepted ; that she should always walk barefoot, even during the winter, and wear only a simple tunic : and her Superiors were obliged to grant her this permission, recognizing the Divine will.”

It was, in fact, the will of God that she should live a life of such extreme austerity *for the expiation of the sins of others*. The penances of this Saint were



admirable because in them she looked to nothing but the will of God and the love of her neighbor. Even in the ecstasies with which she was favored, she suffered in conformity with Jesus Christ.

“Her cries and deep sighing, at the height of her ecstasies, were evident proofs of the sufferings she endured. To suffer was all her desire; and occasionally these sufferings would rise to such a pitch that she could not possibly have survived them, had not the Almighty Hand of God supported her and kept her from falling at the same time that He inflicted upon her these wounds of love. On Monday in Passion week of the year 1586, she entreated the Son of God so earnestly that He would permit her to feel some part of His sufferings during His Passion, that our Blessed Lord granted her request. The whole night between Thursday and Friday, she felt violent pains throughout every part of her body, which increased very much toward ten o'clock in the evening of the same day. Falling into an ecstasy, she endured such agonizing pain throughout her whole body that great drops of sweat flowed from every limb and a torrent of tears gushed from her eyes. She suffered in this manner during the course of several hours, and it seemed hardly possible for any human being to endure such pains and live.”

But even this was not enough; this chosen victim was destined to endure deeper and keener

pains. Almighty God, intending to raise her soul to a still higher degree of sanctity, gave her to understand that for the space of five years she should be deprived of all those heavenly consolations which she had hitherto enjoyed. On hearing this, she became pale as death itself; but knowing that it was the will of God, she resolved to suffer whatsoever He should be pleased to send. God then permitted the devil to harass this holy virgin by five different kinds of temptation: namely, temptations of infidelity, of pride, of impurity, of darkness in the understanding, and of gluttony. She endured these severe trials with redoubled generosity and love toward Him Who thus held her nailed to the cross. She came forth victorious from these as well as from all the other trials of her life, which was one long series of sufferings; and when the time of her reward was come, she went to receive it in Heaven. There she now reigns with her Divine Spouse, together with the blessed souls whom she gained to Him by her prayers, her sufferings, and her love.

The angelic St. Aloysius was also, according to the testimony of St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi herself, another of those chosen victims, one of those Apostles of Suffering who are appointed by God to continue by love and sorrow the work of redemption which was undertaken by His own Divine Son. Let us hear St. Mary Magdalene relate a revelation which she received one day, in an ecstasy, from our

Lord respecting the glory and the hidden martyrdom of St. Aloysius :

“ Oh, how great is the glory which Aloysius, son of Ignatius, now possesses ! I could never have believed it to have been so great, if my Jesus had not manifested it to me. It appears to me that very few of the blessed in heaven enjoy a greater glory than his. I say that Aloysius is a Saint. I say that we have Saints in our church (she meant the Saints whose relics were preserved in the church belonging to the convent) whose glory is not so great as his. If I possibly could, I would travel through the whole world for the purpose of repeating that Aloysius, son of Ignatius, is a Saint. I would wish to display his glory to every eye, that all may know how much God is glorified in this Saint through the magnificence of His gifts to him. It is his hidden and interior life which has won him all this glory. Who can tell how great is the value of interior acts, or the recompense which they obtain ? There is no comparison whatever to be made between outward appearances and inward worth. St. Aloysius, so long as he lived in this world, was ever waiting on the interior whisper of the Word of God to his heart, and ever careful to put those holy inspirations into practice to the uttermost of his power. *He was an unknown martyr* ; for the soul that loves Thee, O my God ! feels Thee to be so great and infinitely lovely, that it suffers a perpetual and cruel martyrdom in

feeling itself wanting in loving Thee as much as Thou deservest to be loved, and in seeing that Thy creatures offend Thee, instead of loving Thee. Not only was he a *martyr*, but a martyr *with all his heart and will*. Oh, how tenderly he loved Thee whilst he was still upon earth ! And now how does he enjoy Thee in the full plenitude of Thy love in heaven ! While he was still in this mortal frame, he darted acts of love, like so many arrows, at the Heart of the Word of God. Now that the Word of God has wounded his own heart with the same darts of love, he knows and enjoys the value and reward of all his former actions.”

She afterward saw that this Saint prayed with especial fervor for those who, whilst yet on earth, had afforded him spiritual consolation and assistance. This caused her to exclaim : “ I too will endeavor to gain souls to God, so that if any of them are so happy as to reach Paradise, they may intercede in the same manner for me.” When the Fathers of the Society of Jesus who were residing at Florence heard of this vision, they immediately entreated the Mother Prioress to give them the substance of it in writing, a request which was granted the more readily, because those Fathers had always rendered great spiritual services to the community. It was on the 4th of April, 1607, that Mary Magdalene of Pazzi was favored with this remarkable vision.

Several centuries before her time, God had

raised up in that same country of Italy, which is so fertile in fruits of sanctity, the illustrious virgin, Catharine of Sienna, to be a living image of His Crucified Son. This true apostle of prayer and suffering was the instrument of effecting incredible good in souls in that disastrous epoch, when they were in the greatest danger of incurring eternal perdition. Her own confessor was not sufficient to hear the confessions of the multitudes of sinners whom her prayers and sufferings had recalled to God ; he was obliged to procure several other priests to assist him in the task. We will give a few anecdotes taken from the life of this humble virgin, to prove the immense influence exercised by her over the Heart of Jesus, her Divine Spouse.

A woman named Palmerina, inspired by a kind of diabolical impulse, conceived so intense a hatred for St. Catharine as to be unable to endure to see her or to hear her voice. She drove her violently from her house, refusing all the services which the holy woman desired to render her by relieving the sickness God had sent her in punishment for her sins. She persevered in these evil feelings until the very hour of her death. Then Catharine prayed more earnestly than ever for that poor soul ; and, falling prostrate before our Lord, she declared to Him that she would never rise until He had taken pity upon the infatuated woman. Her prayer was granted. Our Blessed Lord touched and softened



the heart of that poor creature so that she shed tears of repentance, and after receiving the last Sacraments with edifying devotion she breathed out her soul in peace.

A rich burgher of Sienna, named Andrew, was a most heartless, wicked man, an enemy to God and to His Saints, and a hateful blasphemer of the faith. He was drawing near his end, and still obstinately refused to make his last confession. But an apostle of prayer and suffering was near the wretched man, and her tears and supplications were unceasingly offered for him to God. Again the prayer of Catharine was granted, and the dying man now became meek and gentle as a lamb, acknowledged the wickedness of his past life, confessed his sins, and died in peace.

Our Lord granted to His holy spouse, not only graces of conversion and consolation for sinners, but also graces of devotion and perfection for the just. Thus she obtained for St. Raymond, her confessor, a vehement contrition for sin; for a certain Religious she gained a gift of great tenderness in devotion; and for many others so remarkable spiritual assistance and comfort, that it seemed as if she had only to ask of our Lord and to obtain.

We may now turn to another illustrious apostle of prayer and suffering, born on the distant shores of America; for our Blessed Lord chooses from every land. We mean St. Rose of Lima, a worthy



rival of St. Catharine of Sienna, whose spiritual daughter she considered herself to be. Her mind was occupied night and day with anxiety for souls, for the conversion of sinners; and she would gladly have given a thousand lives to bring back a single one to Jesus Christ.

For their sakes she imposed upon herself severe and terrible mortifications. The writer of her life thus speaks in enumerating these austerities: "Her abstinence was extreme; and ordinary disciplines seemed too gentle for her. She made one for herself out of two iron chains, with which she chastised herself every day until the blood flowed. But this she did with particular severity when she had imposed the penance upon herself for the conversion of sinners. Then she offered herself to God as a victim to make expiation for their sins, thus treating herself with holy cruelty. The hair-shirt which she wore reached from her shoulders to her knees. The bed on which she slept was a bed of suffering and watching rather than one of repose; and for a pillow she used a stone. To these sufferings, which she imposed upon herself in order to attain a close resemblance to her Crucified Lord, the most bitter internal tribulation was very frequently added."

Such is indeed the ordinary action adopted by God toward those souls which He associates more particularly with the sacrifice of His Son. The sufferings endured by our dearest Lord were not

outward only, but also interior and hidden. So the person who is destined to resemble his Crucified Lord, is like Him a Victim of pain and sorrow both in body and mind. This truth appears in a very striking manner in the life of St. Rose of Lima. During fifteen years she underwent continual combats, or rather an agony far more bitter than death itself. . Being delivered over to the most fearful temptations by God's especial permission, she endured for a length of time one of the most heart-rending kinds of suffering incidental to the spiritual life—namely, the trial, or rather the torment, of *darkness* of spirit.

“In this state of terrible obscurity,” says her biographer, “she could no longer think of God; and the demons filled her mind with such frightful spectres that, although this holy virgin had borne the most insupportable anguish with courage, yet she was now quite unable to accustom herself to this species of torture. The mere thought of it was so terrible that, when she felt the hour of her trial approaching, she trembled in every limb, and implored our Lord to spare her this bitter cup, submitting nevertheless as He had done to the will of her Heavenly Father. These sufferings were carried to such a pitch that it was thought proper to have the manner of her spiritual life examined by the most famous theologians of the University of Lima. After submitting her to several examinations,

they came to the conclusion that the sufferings were trials sent by God, Who was preparing her for a state of high perfection by causing her to pass through this period of darkness and suffering. To these interior pains were afterward added several severe illnesses, during which she exclaimed with heroic love and patience, '*O good Jesus, increase my sufferings, but also increase my love!*' At length the hour of her last sacrifice arrived. Her final sickness was an assemblage of all the pains and sufferings that she had endured during the whole course of her life. She suffered agonies for which the physicians could not account by any natural causes, and they confessed that God was acting in supernatural ways to communicate to His Saint a portion of those sufferings which He had endured in His Passion for the salvation of the human race, and which she also was to suffer for the same end."

Less than a century after this, on the same torrid soil of South America, another lovely virgin flourished, who for her admirable innocence was called the *Lily of Quito*. Her name was Marianne de Paredes, and she was born at Quito, then in Peru. She was worthy to be a compatriot of St. Rose of Lima, and devoted her life to treading in her footsteps, as *she* had followed in those of her Crucified Lord. Her life was a continual series of crosses endured with heroic patience for God and souls. She too was a worthy apostle of prayer and suffer-

ing ; and who can say how many poor sinners have entered the gates of Heaven by means of this lowly maiden? She was so eager for suffering that she made a shirt for herself of the prickly leaves which abound in those countries. On her head she wore a crown of thorns which was partly hidden by her veil. She employed a discipline of little iron chains with so great severity that the earth where she knelt was reddened with her blood. She usually slept upon angular pieces of wood, or upon the bare ground ; and she observed a continual fast.

“The end of this holy maiden,” says the writer of her life, “was a true *holocaust* for the sins of her fellow-creatures. In the year 1645, the city of Quito was ravaged and depopulated by a terrible epidemic. The terror of the people at this visitation was still further augmented by frequent earthquakes. On the fourth Sunday in Lent the virgin’s confessor, when explaining the Sacred Scriptures to the people, exhorted them to appease the wrath of God by fervent prayer. He added that if a victim were required, he would willingly offer his own life. The holy woman was amongst the audience. Urged by an impulse from the Holy Spirit she rose immediately, and in words of fire made the offering of her life to God for the pardon of her afflicted people. Her sacrifice was accepted. The earthquakes ceased that very day, and the epidemic became less fatal ; it decreased as fast as she approached her end.

And when this young victim, who had scarcely attained the age of twenty-six years, had breathed her last sigh, the epidemic had completely disappeared. Happy," exclaims her biographer, as he concludes his affecting recital, "happy is that country which possesses this treasure of penance and of merit."

Happy, we in our turn exclaim, happy will our beloved country be if, amidst her misfortunes, God raises up to her some of those chosen souls who generously offer themselves as victims for her welfare. "How many souls," goes on the historian, "have been saved by the austerities of this saintly woman! How many may yet be saved by her prayers! From her throne in heaven she watches over her beloved country. May she preserve it in the true faith, may she restore peace to its borders, and may she obtain from God that it never fall a prey to the devouring wolves which ravage those fair and unhappy countries!"

And we also cry: Ah! how many souls might be saved in our own dear country, even in these days of desolation and sorrow, if voluntary victims, dear to the agonizing Heart of Jesus, would freely offer themselves to *suffer* and to *die* for her; if, following the heroic examples which we have here shown to them, they were ready to devote themselves without reserve, to offer themselves entirely as a whole burnt sacrifice! We are fully convinced that what is



most wanted in France and all other Catholic nations of our day, is *martyrdom*. It seems as if this truth were recognized by the enemies of our faith. Foreseeing that the triumph of religion would naturally follow upon the first blood shed by Catholics for the faith, they make it a rule to avoid at all hazards the semblance of *persecution*. The blood of martyrs is now just as in the days of Nero and Diocletian, the "*seed of the Church*." *Sanguis martyrurum semen Christianorum*.

But although the sword of persecution is not yet lifted to take away our lives, a means is still left us which we may substitute for the martyrdom of blood. Our enemies will not honor us by making us martyrs of the sword. Well, let us be martyrs in heart, by suffering freely accepted. Let us offer ourselves as victims for the salvation of our country and for the triumph of the Church. Let us accept, with this noble aim and uniting ourselves with Jesus Christ, with His agonizing Heart, and with the compassionate Heart of Mary, all the pains, sickness, trials, and sufferings which it may please God in His mercy to send upon us. And if He should be pleased to demand the offering of our life—ah, then, for His love as well as for the love of those souls which He has redeemed with His Blood, let us not refuse Him this last sacrifice! Who can tell whether the merciful justice of God may not have fixed upon this sacrifice as the price which is to purchase the safety of



our country and the approaching triumph of the Church?

But before we conclude this Chapter we must on no account fail to point out, amongst those chosen victims whom our Lord has condescended to associate with Himself in continuing His work of redemption, the humble daughter of St. Francis of Sales, whose heroic virtue and shining miracles have won the solemn honors of beatification. Margaret Mary Alacoque was plainly destined by God to serve as an instrument in His greatest works of mercy. She could be no other than a victim, in union with Jesus Christ her Divine Spouse. From Him, the Son of God, in ever-memorable apparitions, she received a solemn charge and mission to reveal to the world those treasures of grace enclosed in His Sacred Heart, the true Victim of love and suffering for the world's salvation. Those who study the life of this holy Religious of the Visitation, filled as it was with tribulation, grief, and anguish, will not comprehend the full meaning of that long series of trials which made of her life a perpetual martyrdom unless they also comprehend that truth which we have striven so earnestly to impress upon the readers of this little book : that it was the will of the Son of God, not only to effect the work of man's redemption by the Cross, but also to effect its individual application to each one in particular by means of the Cross. And it is for this reason that He perpetuates Himself

as a Victim in His suffering members, especially in some highly privileged souls who are specially chosen by Him to fulfil this sublime mission. Thou wast of the number of those chosen souls, O Blessed Margaret Mary. May we obtain the same favor from the most merciful Heart of Jesus by the aid of thy prayers.

## CHAPTER IX.

### Voluntary Victims of Our Own Day.

God alone can tell the names and the number of those devoted and fervent Christians, men and women, who, in the troublous days in which we live, have received the noble mission of offering themselves with Jesus Christ as a sacrifice of expiation, to obtain from the infinite clemency of God mercy and pardon for this culpable generation. They are found in every walk of life ; in the mansions of the great and the humbler cabins of the poor, among the clergy and in the depths of the cloister. To disarm the hand of Divine Justice so long suspended over our heads has been the self-appointed task of these generous souls. Nor is it prayer alone they offer but voluntary expiations and the daily repeated surrender of their life.

Chief among the grounds of hope we have, with God's grace, for expecting the glorious triumph of the Church and of Catholic France, is this. God grant that the number of these voluntary victims may increase ever more and more. The day of triumph so greatly desired will be thus brought so much the nearer. While waiting here are two touching examples drawn from contemporary sources, which may encourage us to walk in this path of atoning sacrifice. They are to be found in the life of Pius IX. of glorious and venerated memory.

The first is related by the Marquis Anatole de Ségur, author of the Life of the pious and lamented Monseigneur de Ségur, his illustrious brother. Mgr. de Ségur, we have every reason to believe, offered himself as a voluntary victim to obtain the triumph of the Church and the salvation of souls. The moving tale of the Marquis de Ségur which the author of the Life of Pius IX. gives in full runs thus.

“It was through Mgr. Bastide, that I learned to know Mademoiselle Amélie Léautard. This saintle woman, a native of Marseilles was a sort of providency for the poor, the prisoners, and the soldiers. For the poor sick soldiers she secured one great boon, the introduction of the Sisters of Charity into the military hospitals of Marseilles. This admirable Christian woman came to Rome to pray at the Tomb of the Apostles and to obtain the Pope’s blessing. Drawn to stay by an attraction from above, she resolved to end her days in Rome. She became the mother of the Pontifical Zouaves as she had been of the French soldiers at Marseilles.

“In 1866, feeling her strength going and not knowing in what way to continue her work for God, the inspiration came to her to crown her life by a last heroic sacrifice. Pius IX. was seriously ill and his august and precious health caused no little anxiety to Catholics. Mlle. Léautard determined to offer herself as a victim to God in place of His Vicar. She feared however that this might be an act of pre-

sumption and resolved first to have the approval of the Pope himself.

“When she opened to the Pope her sublime desire Pius IX. remained some time silent and motionless, while the sainted woman knelt before him awaiting his answer, her hands clasped and her eyes fixed on his face. At length, as if obeying an interior voice that had spoken to him, he laid his hand on her head and said with an accent of solemnity: ‘Go, my daughter, and do what the Spirit of God has suggested to you.’ He blessed her with emotion, and she retired full of joy.

“The following day was a Sunday. Mlle. Léautard heard, according to her custom, the first Mass at St. Peter’s. After receiving Holy Communion and while the Victim of Love was still in her heart she offered her life for the Pope to Him Who had laid down His life for the human race. Hardly had she completed her offering, when she was seized with sudden and terrible pains. With a cry she fell to the ground. A crowd gathered round her and she was carried home. Some priests and religious who knew her and who happened to be near her in the church accompanied her to her home in the Strada Ripresi dei Barberi.

“The doctor was sent for but he declared his art powerless against this strange attack. All that day and the two days following, she suffered without respite, pains so cruel that she could neither speak nor

thank those who attended her. A smile or a movement of the hands was all she could give them.

“On Wednesday, December 19, relief came. Her pains ceased. She asked for the last Sacraments and received them with angelic joy and devotion. After her thanksgiving she bade good-bye to all her friends and recited the responses to the prayers for the dying with a fervor that touched every heart. When the last words of the prayer were reached : ‘ Depart Christian soul in the name of the Father, Who created thee, in the name of the Son, Who redeemed thee, in the name of the Holy Ghost, Who sanctified thee.’ She bowed her head and was gone.”

The news of this strange death was carried to the Vatican. Pius IX. heard it without betraying any surprise. Raising his eyes to heaven, he said in a voice broken by emotion : “Cosi tosto accettato ! —so soon accepted.”

To this exalted example of Christian heroism we add another not less heroic. We find this also in the *Vie de Pie IX.* It is the Superior of the Sisters of the Prisons, who writes from Paris. Her letter is dated February 27, 1867.

“A young professed, Sister N——, was just completing the years during which the vows are temporary and had been admitted to the profession. In the beginning of December she said to me : ‘ Reverend Mother, you insist so much on our praying for



the Church, I do not know what more I can do. I have been thinking of offering myself as a victim and giving my life for the conversion of the great persecutors of the Church.' 'Suppose God were to take you at your word?' 'I should be well pleased,' she answered me: 'that would show He had accepted my sacrifice; only if it comes before my vows, do not let me die without making them.' I took this as a bit of excessive zeal and attached no importance to it. Two days before she died, she said to me: 'Reverend Mother, I have a pain in the cheek, which gives me great trouble.' I teased her about it saying: 'That is not very much like being a victim, is it?' That same night she came again. The pain had gone down from the cheek to the stomach and she could not stay in the chapel. I sent her to bed. The next day, Saturday, I made her see the doctor, but he did not think much of her indisposition. Sunday passed without any change either for better or for worse. Toward night, as the remedies were producing the contrary effect to what we looked for, I began to be a little anxious. At five o'clock, I sent her to the infirmary. There was no fever. The pulse was good. I sent for the doctor. At eight o'clock, she said to me: 'Reverend Mother, put your hand on my body, it is as cold as ice, and yet inside I am on fire.' Fear took possession of me then. Without waiting for the doctor's verdict, I sent for Father D——. It was time; five minutes

more and we should have been too late. She made her confession, received the Holy Viaticum, Extreme Unction, all the indulgences, pronounced her vows and renewed her sacrifice over and over again. Then like a warrior, she sat up in bed, and raised her eyes to heaven. Then she fell back on the pillow and after three minutes of gentle agony was dead. She gave her last sigh with the peaceful smile of an angel on her lips. The Father was praying interiorly and asking our Lord to send the Choir of Virgins to take her. While the invocation was on his lips, our Sister died.

“We have kept her body three days now, on account of the feasts. Instead of decomposing, her face has a heavenly brightness which manifests the happiness of her soul.”

There is nothing strange in all this. At every epoch since the beginning of Christianity, during the persecutions of the Church especially and at seasons of great public calamity, like instances of Christian heroism have been known, instances of the most sublime devotedness. To cite but one; when the plague was desolating Rome, a young girl, a pupil of the Visitation Convent, offered herself to God if in return He would spare the Sovereign Pontiff. God heard her prayer. She died a victim. Alexander VII. was saved.

O you who read these lines, devoted Christian men and women, here is a future opened to your

generosity. Greater than ever is the need of great sacrifices. The tide of tribulations threatening the Church is ever rising higher. Let us prevent its further rise by our voluntary expiations. Perhaps this is what God is waiting for. This supreme sacrifice may move Him to suspend the visitations of His angered justice, this voluntary offering especially of the life that is ours made in union with that which Jesus Christ made of His life in Gethsemani and on Calvary for the salvation of the human race. Oh, how bright will be in heaven the crown of these apostles, these hidden martyrs! How great and magnificent their recompense for the immense glory they will have given to God and for the countless multitude of souls they will have saved.

## CHAPTER X.

The Qualifications of the Apostles of Suffering, particularly of the Special Victims.

He who offers to pay another's debt must first be able to pay his own. Right order demands that we should not undertake the responsibilities of others until we have performed those which devolve upon ourselves. If you wish to become an apostle of suffering, and most of all a victim especially immolated to God, you must first of all purify your own soul from sin. To the very utmost of your power you must keep from the slightest stain. The first condition required of us, in order to exercise the apostleship of suffering with fruit, is *Purity*. Without purity, your sacrifice can never be pleasing to God. The purer your heart becomes, the greater will be the love and pleasure with which He will graciously accept your humblest offering. The fitness of a Christian to become an apostle of suffering is, then, in proportion to the purity of his heart and the freedom of his soul from every stain of sin before God.

This truth is so evident that St. Paul, when enumerating the qualities of the sacred Victim Who shed His Blood for us on Calvary, exclaims: "*It was fitting that we should have such a High Priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners.*" *Talis*

*enim decebat ut nobis esset Pontifex, sanctus, innocens, impollutus, segregatus a peccatoribus.* (Hebrews, vii. 26.) Now, if it was necessary that Jesus Christ, High Priest and Victim for the salvation of the human race, should be *holy* (*sanctus*), how can you dispense with that primary and essential quality in every victim, *sanctity*, if you wish to be an apostle of suffering, that is, to labor like Him, by your personal immolation, for the salvation of your brethren? And the more sanctity you are possessed of,—that is to say, the more closely you are conformed to Jesus Christ, the Holy Victim,—the more fitted you will be to undertake the apostleship of suffering.

But our High Priest, says St. Paul, must also be *innocent*. The Victim for the sins of the world is called the *Lamb of God* (*Agnus Dei*). The qualities which we admire in a lamb are its gentleness and innocence. The Son of God and of Mary united most wonderfully these touching qualities in His own Person. Jeremias describes Him as a Lamb, meek and gentle, led to the slaughter. *Ego quasi agnus mansuetus, qui portatur ad victimam.* (Jeremias, ii.) It is of Him that the wise man said, “*He is the brightness of eternal light, the spotless mirror of the majesty of God, the faithful image of His goodness.*” *Candor est enim lucis aeternae, speculum sine macula Dei majestatis, et imago bonitatis illius.* (Wisdom, vii.)

If you, then, desire to become an apostle of suffering, you must endeavor to become a lamb of

meekness and innocence before God and men. Be like a lamb under the hand of God, Who immolates you. Suffer Him to offer you in sacrifice according to His will, by the sharpest sufferings, by the most painful trials, by tribulations most repugnant to nature ; and this not only for the space of one day, or one month, but for as long as it shall please Him to ordain. If you are forced to complain, let it be after the pattern of the Lamb of God in the Garden of Olives, when He said in the midst of His agony : "*O my Father, let this cup pass from Me ! nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.*" *Fiat voluntas tua.* Then will you be a true apostle of suffering, because you will be a lamb full of meekness and gentleness. You will appease by your meekness the wrath of God against sinners, who are like devouring wolves.

But if to this lamb-like meekness you unite innocence, that magnificent white vestment which causes the soul to shine so brightly in the sight of God, then you will be indeed a complete and perfect sacrifice. You will be invested with all power over the Heart of God, to incline Him to mercy toward those poor sinners whose salvation you implore. It is true that black lambs are pretty enough, but they are not white ; and however rich they may be in good qualities, that of being white is not possessed by them and yet men love to find this in a lamb.



O profound and impenetrable mysteries of grace! O sovereign independence of the gifts of God! It sometimes happens that souls which have not always been faithful to God, which have even been so unhappy as to offend often and grievously against His Divine Majesty, become under His almighty hand apostles of suffering, special victims, instruments of grace that act with greater efficiency in winning souls to God than such of their fellow-laborers as have sinned less than they, but who have not followed up the continued action of grace with the same love and devotedness. We must not attempt to fathom the mysteries of the good pleasure of God. God is the Master of His own gifts, and the Spirit breatheth where He willeth. *Spiritus ubi vult spirat.* However, it is certain that such as have been so happy as to preserve their purity and innocence, are more fitted, naturally and supernaturally, to be united to the sacrifice of the God-Man. It is most frequently amongst these pure and holy Christians that God delights to select His chosen victims, whom He uses as His instruments to procure the salvation of many. But no one is excluded from this great ministry, for which purity is not more essential than humility and love.

Let those who have to weep for the faults of their past lives, which they would gladly efface with tears of blood, take courage, for they are not excluded from the *apostleship of suffering*. Remember the

examples of St. Mary Magdalene, St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Augustine, and of so many others who, after lives more or less displeasing to God, gave themselves up entirely to His grace and became Saints. Now the Saints are instruments in the salvation of souls ; they continue the work of reparation which was begun by Jesus Christ, because they are closely united to His Cross by sorrow and to His Heart by love. But the Cross of Jesus Christ was the instrument by which the world's salvation was effected ; and His Divine Heart is the inexhaustible source and foundation of this salvation.

St. Paul adds, speaking of Jesus our High Priest and Victim : "*He is undefiled and separate from sinners.*" *Impollutus, segregatus a peccatoribus.* We need not enter into a separate developement of these qualities, which are only the consequences of the preceding. Besides, they will be explained sufficiently by the remarks to be made in the following Chapter.

## CHAPTER XI.

### Summary of Dispositions required.

The following question is necessary to render the instruction given practical.

What are the principal dispositions with which the apostles of suffering, and particularly the special victims of charity, should be endowed?

1st. They must possess a *spirit of faith* making them firmly believe in the infinite virtue of the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ and in the perpetuity of that Sacrifice, not only in an unbloody manner in the Most Holy Eucharist, but also in a suffering and consequently a bloody manner in the living members of His Mystical Body.

Let all those who aspire to the glorious title of apostles of suffering, believe firmly in these truths; believe that the sacrifice of the living members of Jesus Christ, united to the sacrifice of their Divine Head, has power to contribute not only to their own salvation, but also, in a certain measure, to the salvation of others. Let them believe that the more closely they are united to Jesus Christ by sorrow and by love, the more fully they participate in the merits of His Sacrifice, and consequently the more do they contribute to the salvation and perfection of souls. Finally, even when it may appear to you that your sufferings obtain no perceptible results in favor of

those for whom you offer them, still be not discouraged. The work you have undertaken is a work of faith, the results of which are often known to God alone ; but they are not the less precious or less real.

2dly. They must be possessed of a *spirit of humility*. "*What hast thou that thou hast not received? If then thou hast received, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?*" *Quid autem habes quod non accepisti. Si autem accepisti, quid gloriaris quasi non acceperis?* (I. Corinthians, iv. 7.) "*By the grace of God I am what I am.*" *Gratia autem Dei sum id quod sum.* (I. Corinthians, xv. 10.) Thus speaks the great Apostle St. Paul.

Like him, the apostles of suffering, if they would not labor in vain, must faithfully render to God the glory of all the good which is found in themselves and of the good which by His grace they effect in others, of all which He alone is the Author and Cause. Yes, be well assured of this, your apostleship will be unfruitful if you are not *humble*. God will not accept your offering if it be stained with pride. If He condescends to accept it, it will only be in part, after cutting away that which is corrupted as you would cut from a decaying fruit. You cut off the worthless portion, and make use of that which is good. But take care that your pride does not grow to such a pitch as to vitiate the whole fruit of your labors and sacrifices. You would then suffer without the slightest fruit ; and next to sin there is no state

in the world so sad as this. If you desire that your sufferings and sorrows should bring forth abundant fruits of grace and salvation, you must suffer in a spirit of humility like that Divine Victim Who, being innocence itself, bent with lowly meekness beneath the chastening hand of His heavenly Father's justice.

Remember that, amongst all the maxims of the spiritual life, the most important for all those who aspire to perfection, and still more for those who desire to contribute to the salvation and perfection of souls, is the following: "*God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.*" *Deus superbis resistit, humilibus autem dat gratiam.* (I. Peter, v.)

This explains why, among so many souls who make profession of piety, there are so few who enter deeply into the ways of union with God. It is because among these souls there are so few willing to go forth entirely from themselves. They are like a ship moored in one place, which cannot move until the cable be severed. Only break the bond, and your soul, no longer captive, will be carried on with the powerful stream of grace until it reaches the broad ocean of perfection. Thus your loss will become your gain. But so long as you withhold this final sacrifice of yourself—of your vanity, pride, self-love—so long will that highest favor accorded only to the humble be denied to you; and you will never be a perfect apostle of suffering.

3dly. They must obtain a *spirit of patience and*

*conformity to the holy will of God.* Suffering in itself has nothing attractive. Everything about it is painful and grievous; and the first impulse of our nature inclines us to refuse and repel it. How does it then happen that the true servants of God love suffering? The reason is this: they look at it on the *divine side*, *under its divine character*, as we have endeavored to explain in the course of this work. And suffering, when regarded in this light, cannot be otherwise than attractive; for on this side we behold it resplendent with the Blood of Jesus Christ.

St. Andrew must certainly have contemplated suffering under this God-like aspect when, addressing the Cross upon which he was about to suffer, he exclaimed, "*O good Cross!*" *O bona Crux!* Good, not because of the pain which it will inflict upon me, but because that pain, united to the sufferings of my Jesus, will enable me to manifest my love to Him. Good, because by this Cross, as by a royal road, I shall now ascend to heaven and enjoy the presence of my God eternally. *O bona Crux!* O good Cross! Yes, the Cross is indeed good to you, fervent apostles of suffering. To you it opens the gates of heaven and it gives you a mighty means of opening them to many a poor sinner. Then, *patience and conformity to the holy will of God* in all the trials which He shall see fit to send you! It is God Who has chosen us to be His *victims*; it is for Him to choose our Cross, and to lay it upon us.



4thly. They must have a *spirit of love*. *Ama, et fac quod vis*, said St. Augustine. “*Love, and do what thou wilt.*” It would be impossible to express in fewer words the power and fruitfulness of divine love in the heart of man. Love, and you become in a way all-powerful over the Heart of God, drawing Him to your desires and prayers and sufferings. Your love shall make your will so perfectly conformable to the will of God, that you will nothing but what He wills and all that He wills.

Can any disposition be more perfect than this, more pleasing to the Heart of God? How great is the power of a beloved wife over the heart of her husband! how great the influence of a tenderly loved child over the heart of his father! The soul which loves our Lord Jesus Christ with an intense and devoted love, is strongly and tenderly loved by Him. And as love consists in the reciprocal communication of two hearts, of all that they are and have, so a soul gives itself wholly to Jesus, and Jesus Himself to the soul. Thus by His love it is made rich in the possession of God and in the infinite treasures of His grace. O favored souls of those who are thus closely united to the Sacred Heart of Jesus by love and suffering! do not fear to draw largely from this deep Fount of every blessing abundant grace for yourselves, your families, your friends; for the Church, the Sovereign Pontiff, for the just and for sinners—in a word, for all mankind. The fountain

is inexhaustible ; for God, whilst ever giving, remains always the same, the *Infinite*, the *Unchangeable*.

5thly. They must possess *a spirit of zeal*. “*Qui non zelat, non amat,*” St. Augustine says again. “*He that has no zeal, has no love.*” How can any one say that he loves God, when he is indifferent to the eternal salvation of the souls which have cost Him so dear? The greater our love for God, the greater will be our zeal for His glory and for the salvation of our fellow-creatures. And when could the real friends of God find stronger motives for holy zeal than in such unhappy times as these, when the holy cause of God and of souls is so fiercely attacked by His many enemies? Yes, the hour approaches, it is even now come, when in defence of the sacred cause we must employ every means which the Holy Spirit has given into our hands.

Now, amongst these spiritual weapons there is one which yields to no other in power and efficacy—the *apostleship of suffering*. Exercise this apostleship in the midst of your families. Whatever your trials, your tribulations, your bodily affliction may be, accept them patiently. Offer them to God in union with the sufferings of Jesus Christ, for the expiation of your own sins in the first place, and afterward for the salvation of every member of your family, which may number at least one prodigal son. Exercise this apostleship in the parish where you reside, O pious and fervent soul, for the benefit of every

one of its inhabitants. How many of them need to be converted! How many more, though in the right way at the present moment, are yet in danger of wandering away and being lost. Offer for their salvation, your sufferings, trials, privations, poverty, infirmities, sickness; and when God calls you to Himself, offer also for them your last agony and death.

And you, devoted Priests, may exercise the *apostleship of suffering* by a life of humility, labor, patience, and mortification. Offer yourselves frequently as victims with Jesus Christ for your flocks and for all the souls of men, especially for the most neglected. Make this offering especially when you are at the holy Altar and during the precious moments of thanksgiving, when the sacred Victim is still corporally present in you as in a living tabernacle and communicates a greater value to your sacrifice by His sacred Presence. We have heard of holy Priests who were so inspired by faith that they demanded and obtained of God the favor of dying immediately after they had celebrated Holy Mass, in order that the sacrifice of their life, united to that of the Lamb without spot then dwelling in them, might be more pleasing to Almighty God. What a happy death was this! But let us not content ourselves, venerable brethren, with exercising the apostleship of suffering in our own persons. Let us exercise it also by means of the souls confided to our

care. Let us teach the faithful who suffer and who die in such numbers before our eyes and as it were in our arms, to suffer and to die as *apostles of suffering*—that is to say, for the salvation of souls, and especially for the conversion of sinners in their own parishes, and for the immediate necessities of the Church and of their country.

Devoted Pastors ! in the sick, the suffering, and the dying you have an inexhaustible fund of blessing and salvation, on which you can always draw for the spiritual benefit of your parishes ; or, if you are chaplains, for the spiritual good of the hospitals, charitable institutions, or other establishments which are under your charge ; or again, if you are missionaries, for the distant countries in which you are laboring in the sweat of your brow. Say then, with the heart of an apostle, to the sick person you visit, to the dying man whom you are aiding : “ My friend, remember that Jesus Christ suffered and died for you upon the Cross. You are one of His suffering members, and at this very moment you are hanging upon the Cross with Him. Unite yourself to His sufferings and Death, and say with me from your heart : ‘ O my Saviour Jesus ! I offer to Thee my sufferings and the sacrifice of my life for the expiation of my sins ; for the salvation of all the members of my family ; for the conversion of all the sinners in this parish, or in this hospital ; for the needs of the Holy Catholic Church, in whose bosom

I desire to live and die. I offer them for my country. My Jesus, mercy! Agonizing Heart of Jesus, have mercy on the dying! Mary, refuge of sinners, pray for me! ' "

And you also, fervent Religious, exercise the apostleship of suffering in your Communities. Offer continually to God your labors, mortifications, and privations ; your vigils, trials, sicknesses ; your last agony and your death—for the salvation of souls ; for the solid advancement of all your spiritual brethren or sisters in the path of religious perfection ; for the triumph of Holy Church and of the Sovereign Pontiff ; for the spiritual needs of your own and all other nations ; for the Catholic education of the young ; for the complete extirpation of the secret societies which are so dangerous to our holy religion and lead so many souls to destruction. Exhort those persons for whom you exercise your ministry of charity and zeal, to bear their sufferings with patience and to offer them to God for the same ends. . . .

Finally, let us all, as living members of Jesus Christ, exercise this good and holy *apostleship of suffering* with all the zeal and earnestness of which we are capable. Let us believe firmly that in the sufferings, the labors, the sicknesses and tribulations of the living members of Jesus Christ, there is an inestimable treasure of buried and hidden grace.

Let us seek diligently for this hidden treasure in a spirit of faith, humility, patience, love, and zeal for our own spiritual benefit as well as for the salvation and perfection of our brethren in Jesus Christ.



## CHAPTER XII.

On the Direction of our Intention in Suffering.

The apostleship of suffering is a kind of interior and hidden priesthood, the members of which being closely bound together in Jesus Christ perpetuate His Sacrifice from age to age throughout all generations. Between this kind of secret priesthood and the priesthood properly so called, some very striking analogies exist which may well be investigated in connection with the subject of the present Chapter. By holy ordination the Catholic Priest has been *consecrated*, to offer the holy Victim of Calvary upon the altar and to perpetuate unto the consummation of ages, in an unbloody manner, the Bloody Sacrifice of the Cross. The apostle of suffering, especially if he has received the mission to suffer as a *special victim*, is, we do not say *consecrated*, but in a peculiar manner *deputed* to offer himself in sacrifice upon the altar of his own heart in union with the sacred Victim of Calvary, and thus to perpetuate in a bloody manner the Bloody Sacrifice of the Cross.

In the Priest there are two perfectly distinct things; namely, *the radical power* and *the exercise of that power*. The first of these confers upon him, together with the sacerdotal character, the inalienable faculty and power of consecrating the Body and

Blood of the Lord. This radical power, belonging to the character of his office, exists and always will exist in the Priest independently of his own will: *Tu es sacerdos in aeternum*. But it is not so with respect to the *exercise of the power*. In fact, in order that the Priest may exercise this power *validly*—that is to say, so as really and efficaciously to change the bread and wine which are placed before him into the Body and Blood of our Lord—he must not only have the *power*, but the *intention* also, the *will* to consecrate that bread and wine. Now, in their different degrees, a striking analogy exists between the Priest who consecrates the Lord's Body and offers It in sacrifice to God the Father, and the apostle of suffering, who is a living member of Jesus Christ and offers himself in sacrifice in union with Jesus Christ.

In fact, in the Christian who suffers with an apostolic end in view, we must distinguish between *his union with the sacrifice of Jesus*, and *the exercise of that union* for the salvation of souls. By the one, he sanctifies *himself*; by the other he labors for the sanctification and salvation of his brethren. By means of the one, Jesus bestows His grace upon you in abundant measure; by the other He pours out His grace through you upon your neighbor, as by a life-bringing channel.

Undoubtedly, your union with Jesus Christ is sufficient for your own perfection and happiness.

But it is not sufficient for the spiritual needs of your brethren, if you do not apply it to their benefit. Of what profit are all the treasures of the rich man to the mendicant who implores relief, if the rich man keeps all his treasures for himself alone? It is the same with respect to those treasures of grace which the Heavenly Spouse bestows upon you in virtue of your intimate union with Him. Thus also is it with the rich blessings which He showers upon your soul. If you wish that sinners, who are the chief mendicants of the world, should participate in these graces and benedictions which you have received, you must direct your *intention* in their favor and for their spiritual necessities. Your *intention* will be the channel through which the grace of conversion will reach their souls, when you have obtained it for them by the labors you have undergone and the sufferings you have endured with patience and with love.

Therefore, if you desire your labors, trials, and sufferings to turn to the good of any person in particular, to the benefit of certain communities or nations, take care to direct your *intention* in their behalf and say to God, at least with your heart: "O my God, I offer Thee these pains, labors, and sufferings for the salvation of souls, and especially for such and such persons." Or say as follows: "O my Saviour Jesus, I unite my labors and sufferings to Thy labors and Thy sufferings. I offer them to

Thee with deep humility for the ends and intentions for which Thou didst labor and suffer. I offer them to Thee for the Church, for the Sovereign Pontiff, for my country, for all the members of my family, of this parish,"—or for any other intention. Renew your *intention* with great fervor two or three times in the course of the day, and it will be sufficient.

We do not mean to assert that God, in His infinite goodness and friendship for a faithful soul, even without the knowledge of the soul and without waiting for her to express her intention, may not grant many favors to those near and dear to her.

In this manner does a tender and generous father act toward the friends of his children. But it is no less true that God ordinarily wishes His friends and servants to co-operate more expressly with Him in the distribution of His favors. By this means He procures for them opportunities of acquiring greater merit, He associates them with Himself in the exercise of His charity and spiritual fatherhood, and He fulfils many other purposes worthy of His infinite wisdom. Thus does a queen obtain by her entreaties special benefits from her princely spouse for those of her subjects whom she has taken under her special protection. For some, she obtains a private pension ; for others, the remission or mitigation of some penalty they have incurred.

Let us then pray and suffer with an *intention*

from time to time clearly expressed and renewed. Let us suffer and pray with confidence, humility, and love; and thus we shall obtain for the Church, for our country, for ourselves and others, a great abundance of grace and spiritual benediction.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Various Pains and Trials which are endured by Special Victims in particular.

Our readers will permit us to insert in this place a short enumeration of the principal trials to which the apostles of suffering may be exposed, especially if it has pleased God to entrust them with a special mission of suffering for the salvation of souls.

Of all the pains and trials which we suffer, of what nature soever they may be, there is not one which is not capable of being turned to the spiritual benefit of our neighbor. There is nothing but sin which is unfit to be offered to God for any purpose whatever, because sin is unmixed evil. All other things, even the pain and sorrow which is caused by sin—remorse, regret, and the like—are susceptible of being offered to God and made profitable for the salvation of souls.

We find, then, two kinds of pain or suffering in this world; namely, physical sufferings and moral sufferings. The first kind has its seat or cause in the body; the second, in the soul. Bodily sufferings, as they affect the less noble part of man, are, all other things being equal, less profound, less lacerating, and less meritorious. Spiritual sufferings affect directly the nobler part of man, and are in their nature more deep, more intense, and more meritorious.



## I.

## Physical Sufferings and Trials.

These occur in countless variety. Original sin is their radical and universal cause. Their proximate or immediate causes are either exterior or interior. Those of the former class are as follows: cold, heat, the various annoyances arising from the seasons, contagion or infection in the atmosphere; accidents of a thousand different kinds proceeding from natural causes, as the fracture of a limb from the accidental fall of some object; or from voluntary causes, such as the austerities which you may impose upon yourself in a spirit of penance, or the blows of an enemy; sickness, infirmities, hunger, thirst, privations of every kind to which we are rendered liable by poverty, indigence, reverses of fortune, and the like. Such are a few of the numerous external causes which act disastrously on the human frame, and cause it pain, fatigue, grief, suffering; all being deeply felt by the soul which is united to the body.

The interior causes which produce bodily suffering proceed from the body itself, as from its organization, natural weakness, bad constitution; or from extreme fatigue, over-work. They also proceed from the moral sufferings of the soul which, being united in the closest possible manner to the body, communicates to it impressions of sadness, grief, anger, excitement, and of all the passions, thus causing the body to participate in its own pains and sufferings.

O pious souls, who desire to become apostles by suffering, accept sufferings, trials, weariness, when they fall to your lot, as if our Lord Himself were to appear before you and present them to you with His own gracious Hand! They are, in fact, precious fragments of the Cross, which He gives you as pledges of His love, causing you to attain a closer resemblance to Him.

This explains the great love which the Saints have always shown for bodily sufferings, and particularly for *sickness*. It is related of St. Francis Borgia that on one occasion he requested our Lord to send him some bodily malady. He offered his prayers with such extraordinary fervor that one of his companions, supposing that he was demanding some great favor, besought our Lord to grant the same to him also. He was suddenly attacked by severe illness, which caused him the acutest suffering. Never for an instant imagining that this was the favor which the Saint had so earnestly requested, he begged St. Francis to intercede with God for his recovery, and this our Saint did with ready charity.

“Few people profit by sickness to become better,” the author of the “Imitation” says: *Pauci ex infirmitate meliorantur*. And yet sickness, of all physical sufferings, furnishes us with the most efficacious means of drawing near to God and uniting ourselves closely to His Divine Son Who was crucified. How many poor sinners have been indebted

to some severe illness and the serious reflections it brought for their conversion to God, after long years of wandering from His service! How many pious people have become more holy upon a bed of sickness—more patient, more humble, more resigned to the holy will of God, more detached from earthly things and this present life, so as to love only God and the things of eternity.

Therefore, whoever you are and to whatever condition you belong, receive sickness, when it seizes you, in a spirit of great faith, humility, resignation, and love. Thus will you obtain the blessing of God upon your family, and upon the community to which you belong. And if those surrounding you do not understand, as they ought to do, that a sick person in a house, or a community, is a suffering member of Jesus Christ, and in a certain sense Jesus Christ Himself, then bear with patience their forgetfulness, their neglect, their ill-humor, carelessness and abandonment—in a word, behavior which is uncharitable and unworthy of a Christian, and still more of a Religious. Just in proportion as you gain good to your own soul from all these painful events, will the person who serves with so little kindness and goodwill the suffering member of Jesus Christ have cause to repent of his behavior in your regard.

There are many Superiors of Religious Communities who greatly need to direct their attention to this important matter—who need to be reminded

that they should consider it a special blessing from God when He sends a sick person into their house, especially so when the sufferer is patient, humble, and resigned. They ought especially to exhort the sick person to bear his sickness, or infirmity, in a spirit of humility, love, and resignation—to offer himself in sacrifice, in union with Jesus Christ, for the salvation of souls, for the present needs of the Church and of his country, and particularly for the spiritual benefit of every member of the Community; and, if he be in a house devoted to the education of youth, for the salvation of the children who attend it. And when the hour of death at length arrives, it is doubly necessary to encourage him, to exhort him paternally to offer up his life with generosity in union with Jesus Christ dying, for the salvation of mankind and for the intentions which we have already mentioned.

It is thus all those Saints who were founders of Religious Orders intended their children to profit by sickness—that is, in a spirit of apostolic zeal. Take courage then, dear afflicted ones, who have long lain upon a bed of sickness, who have been long reduced to a state of distressing weakness. Be comforted. You are the suffering members of Jesus Christ. Believe this firmly, and act upon it: upon you is now devolved the mission of continuing in your family, in your community, in your monastery, the Sacrifice of Jesus suffering. And you who are

in your death-agony, to you is entrusted the mission of perpetuating the agony of Jesus in the Garden of Olives and His death upon the Cross. Oh, what a sublime mission ! Others are called to preach, to teach, to devote their lives to the cure of the sick in hospitals ; that is to say, to perpetuate the life of Jesus teaching, preaching, healing the infirm and sick. But *your* mission, *your* part, is to suffer, to do what Jesus, your Divine Head, did all His life long from the cradle to the tomb : for, as we before observed, Jesus was not always preaching, He was not always healing the sick ; but He always prayed, and always suffered.

Suffer then in union with Him, according to His will, in union with His dispositions, in union with His intentions and appointed ends. Mingle your sufferings with His sufferings, keep yourself closely united to Him as the members are united to the head and the heart, and as the branches abide in the vine. Then will your sufferings and death be truly apostolic ; then will you gain souls, many souls to God. Then will you be an apostle through suffering, in sickness and in death.

We were once acquainted with a young Religious who was a perfect example of self-abnegation and of all those virtues which appear in Saints. His name was Charles Bertrand. He was born in a small town in Velay, educated at the Bishop's seminary of Puy, where he edified his fellow-students by the



example of all virtues, then proceeding to Avignon, he began his novitiate among the Jesuits and took the first vows after a probation of two years. He was afterward sent to Vals to complete his course in theology, where he continued to set an example of religious perfection, having only one fault, that of unsparing severity to himself. This noble defect of great minds was yours, O beloved brother; but it does not appear to have displeased our Lord, for He granted you His sweetest caresses, His choicest graces. And, when the purification of your saintly soul was perfected by nine months of severe suffering, which you endured with angelic patience, He deigned to summon you to His Presence in heaven, accepting your life as a sacrifice of sweet odor for that numerous community of brethren who were witnesses of your last hours. Who can say whether the admirable work which was begun in that community and which has already spread its kindly influence over the world—the *Apostleship of Prayer*—may not owe some part of its existence and marvellous propagation to your holy influence? Yourself an *apostle of suffering*, did you not cause that *Apostleship of Prayer* to bring forth fruit by your sufferings and death? Complete your task in the abodes of bliss, and be now the protecting angel of the *Apostleship of Suffering*; bless that work which is the completion of the first, which sprang from the same source, in that same spot where the sweet Virgin of Puy, *Notre-*



*Dame de France*, delights to bestow her maternal blessing.

## II.

### Moral Sufferings and Trials.

These are of innumerable kinds, and like those of the body they all have for their root and universal cause, original sin. But our Lord in His infinite mercy vouchsafes to turn them all, like our bodily sufferings, to our true good—that is, to the expiation of our offences, to our progress in perfection by moulding us into a more perfect resemblance to Jesus Christ, and finally to the increasing of our merits in time and our glory in eternity.

Moral trials and sufferings have their seat in the soul itself, and thence they re-act upon the body. Physical trials and sufferings have their seat or cause in the body, whence they re-act upon the soul. We have already said that as the soul is superior to the body and more noble in its nature, the sufferings which directly affect it, that is, which have their seat in the soul, are by far the most painful. This is the reason why, in the spiritual life, *interior sufferings* are considered far more difficult to endure than exterior sufferings. From this, also, we may form some idea of the intensity of the suffering of the holy Soul of Jesus in the Garden of Olives, and even during His whole life: for his Soul was always in a state of suffering, and the Cross was ever planted in His loving Heart.

The sufferings of the soul like those of the body have many different causes, some of which are external, the others internal. The first are those which come from without. Of this kind are all those events in our life which cause sadness or perturbation of soul, such as loss of property or employment, of rank and honors, reverse of fortune, abandonment by friends, death of relations, public calamities and revolutions, domestic troubles, and the like.

The internal causes are those which reside in the soul itself and which give rise to a thousand fears, apprehensions, and sufferings. As long as we remain in this life of trial, our soul will be subject to many tribulations which arise from its natural weakness of comprehension, of will, or of affection. There are, in fact, in the constitution of the soul as in the constitution of the body certain weak parts, if we may use the expression, which give rise to infirmities and spiritual diseases. Thus we often meet with souls weak both in mind and will, a perpetual torment to themselves by creating difficulties and conjuring up fears. Thus our past faults and the consequent remorse, our regrets, bitter remembrances, wasted affections, blasted hopes, the uncertainty of a threatening future, are so many causes which depress our minds to a greater or less extent and give rise to moral sufferings of almost infinite variety.

The apostle of suffering who desires to turn

these interior trials to profit for the glory of God and the salvation of men, must accept and endure them with the same disposition as our Lord in the Garden of Olives, when He exclaimed : “*My soul is sorrowful even unto death.*” *Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem* ; or on the Cross, when He cried : “*My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me.*” *Deus, Deus meus, ut quid dereliquisti Me.* This is the best way of softening our troubles and also of rendering them efficacious for our own spiritual benefit and for the good of others.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### Of Interior Trials.

We have spoken in the preceding Chapters of the trials or sufferings of the soul. We think it necessary, however, for the consolation of those whom God visits with peculiar suffering, to enter into some further particulars and to treat more directly of what are called in the spiritual life *interior trials*. At all times, but perhaps in our own days more than ever before, the Priest who is a director of the consciences of others frequently meets with souls exposed to these interior trials, who seem to bear the Cross unceasingly in their hearts. As this peculiar state of trial, when endured with resignation, is capable of becoming very meritorious to the sufferers themselves and very beneficial to those on whose behalf their sufferings are offered, we propose to make it the subject of a special Chapter.

The state of a person who is enduring those *interior trials* of which we are here about to speak, is very different from that of such as have no other moral sufferings to endure than those to which every Christian, as a man, is naturally subject. To these we are all exposed, in a greater or less degree, according to the conditions more or less painful in which our soul may happen to be. This last condition, in fact, is in nothing removed from the

ordinary course of things. Given human nature such as it is and events as they generally are, it is impossible but that every man, and consequently every Christian, should have to suffer moral trials of greater or less intensity and of more or less duration.

The state of such souls as are called upon to endure *interior trials*, in the sense in which we here understand the phrase, is a *supernatural* state in which God intervenes in an especial manner—first, to procure more frequent and trying occasions of suffering to these souls ; and, secondly, to grant them more abundant graces, so that they may be strengthened to bear those internal trials courageously and may thus obtain greater merit for themselves and for their brethren by uniting themselves more closely to the holy Soul of Jesus. Considered in this light, this state appears to be a *special favor* conferred by God, which should be highly esteemed and made a subject of lively gratitude and thanksgiving. Every state, painful as it may be, in which God places the soul for the purpose of communicating to it a more perfect degree of love and resemblance to His Divine Son, ought to be regarded as an extraordinary favor. Now, in the spiritual life we know of no state more proper to procure such great blessings to a soul than the state of trial of which we are speaking. For if it be true (as no one can venture to doubt) that suffering borne patiently for the love of God is

the shortest and surest road by which to arrive at perfection, then must this be still more true of those interior sufferings which have their seat in the soul, and which are consequently more noble and more meritorious.

We may, in fact, consider these interior trials either in the light of a *reward* on the part of God, or of a *chastisement*; or simply as a *particular mode of operation* by means of which God gradually disengages the soul from earthly affections and interests and renders it more supernatural and divine. In all these different cases, interior trials are a *special favor from the hand of God*.

This is very evident in all those cases in which they are sent as a *reward*, and this very frequently happens. It is written, "*Because thou wast pleasing to God, therefore temptation was sent to prove thee.*" *Quia acceptus eras Deo, necesse fuit ut tentatio probaret te.* (Tobias, xii.) These are the words of the Angel Raphael to Tobias. And it is said elsewhere, in speaking of the just man: "*God gave him the opportunity of a great combat that he might have the glory of victory.*" *Certamen forte dedit illi ut vinceret.* (Wisdom, x.)

In support of these words of Holy Scripture, we might cite a great number of examples to show that interior trials of this kind are frequently sent to the most saintly souls in recompense for their fidelity, as a means to enable them to attain closer union with



God and to gain more perfect resemblance to Jesus Christ. To convince yourself of this truth, you need only read the lives of those Saints whom God has led more particularly by this way of sorrows. And not only so, but many of those generous souls have earnestly requested that God would be pleased to lead them, for His love, through this thorny path of multiplied tribulations. Many of the Saints obtained this favor in such full measure that poor human nature shrinks from the contemplation of their sufferings. Such, amongst others, were St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, and St. Catharine of Sienna, who, having offered themselves as victims for the Church, endured the most incredible inward trials.

Considered in the light of *chastisements*, interior trials are likewise great favors from the hand of God. Many kinds of chastisement are simply the indication and expression of His tenderest, burning love. A father loves his son more than he loves his servant. Yet how many faults he leaves unnoticed in the servant, which he would reprove most severely in the case of his son. And this suggests to us the comparison of the tree which the husbandman prunes most carefully that it may bring forth more fruit, while he leaves some other tree wholly untouched. Once more, consult the lives of the Saints and see if it be not true that God, by means of these trials, often chastises the souls of those who are most dear to Him, just because He loves them so tenderly.

He delights to cast these well-beloved souls into this purgatory of sorrow in order to draw them nearer and unite them more closely to Himself, when some slight faults or habits of imperfection have disturbed that sacred union. Scruples, for example, which are a most distressing kind of interior trial and from which many of these saintly souls have suffered in a greater or less degree, are sometimes a chastisement inflicted by God upon His faithful servants, in token of His great love for them and as a means of obliging them to cast themselves into His arms. Now, is it not evident that such a procedure on the part of God is a great favor, an unspeakable grace? *Non fecit taliter omni nationi.* No, God does not grant to every soul of man such special marks of predilection as this.

Lastly, when interior sufferings are sent to any soul as a pure trial,—that is, as an instrument designed to *work supernaturally* in that soul and thus to wean it altogether from every earthly element so that it may be more perfectly united to God—then is it still evident that they rank among God's most precious favors, being a peculiar mark of His predilection. They are a refining vessel of extreme power and efficacy, in which the soul is quickly purified as gold is purified in the furnace. For in this order of supernatural things, just as in the order of nature and of art, there are diverse operations, trials of different kinds, which the faithful soul must

undergo before it can arrive at that degree of perfection in which the Divine Workman will transform it into the image and resemblance of the Son of God.

To enable us to comprehend the necessity of these mysterious operations in the souls which God calls to perfection, we must remember that by original sin human nature was cast into the profoundest depths of abasement, weakness, and degradation. The grace of holy baptism, which gives to the child the character of Christian and makes him a child of God and a member of Jesus Christ, removes from him the stain of original sin. But it leaves in the soul a foundation of wretchedness and corruption which, when the child becomes a man, will be the cause of perpetual warfare and will give him occasion unto death to practise the most exalted virtues, but more especially patience. Therefore every man, even after he has received the grace of holy baptism, still has within him some remains of the fall of our first parents—namely, enfeebled reasoning powers, a will weakened and inclined to evil, depraved senses which give rise to concupiscence, and passions ever ready to rebel against the control of reason.

We now understand why God, before He can enter into a more substantial and intimate union with the soul of man, makes that soul pass through various preparatory stages of trial and many suc-

cessive operations, which are intended to purify it more fully, and to fit it more completely for the divine union. It thus happens that these trials are generally the preludes of a more abundant communication of Himself and of those favors which He proposes to confer upon the soul by raising it to a higher degree of contemplation and of union with God. For it is only on condition of passing through these painful stages of trial, to a greater or less extent, that the soul can hope to be raised to so desirable a consummation.

Doubtless God is free to bestow His gifts according to His own will, by one act of which He could, in an instant, raise the soul from the lowest abodes of this world to the sublimest region of the third heaven. But it is not thus that He usually proceeds in the ordinary ways of His Providence, which are full of harmony and wisdom. He takes man just as he is, just as original sin has made him, just as his own actual sins have made him ; and He labors in this barren ground as the laborer ploughs up the fallow field, sparing no pains to render it fruitful ; that is to say, to make it fit to receive the divine seed of eternal life and bring forth fruit a hundredfold. Just as the laborer, who before he sows his fields, begins by burning up or rooting out the briars which encumber the ground, and by ploughing deep furrows in the soil ; so does the Divine Husbandman of souls when He finds a barren,

unfruitful soil,—that is to say, a Christian soul full of sins and faults; or the soul of a Religious full of imperfections; or the soul of a Priest lukewarm and indifferent,—begin strongly to work in that soul by burning up the briers and thorns;—that is, He destroys all sin and imperfection, the inordinate love of praise, of worldly honors, or of the comforts and luxuries which belong to an earthly and sensual life.

But this is not sufficient. As it is His will to lift up this soul, He is not content with saving it from the corrupting influences of sin. He goes still farther than this. He penetrates to the very depths of its nature to purify, to soften, and to rectify it; He pours into the soul the vivifying influence of His grace; in a word, He deifies it by union with Jesus Christ. There are souls in which this union with Jesus Christ is raised, by this mysterious course of purification, to such a degree of perfection that they feel the life of Jesus Christ in them and their life in Jesus Christ. They can say with perfect truth, in the words of St. Paul: *“I live, yet not I, but Jesus Christ liveth in me.”* *Vivo ego, jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus.*

In order to arrive at any degree of this intimate union with God,—in order for the soul to receive any special and superabundant communication of the Divine life,—it must ordinarily pass through the furnace of tribulation, through this purifying fire of trial and interior suffering, which fits it to receive the



operation of grace and to produce its proper fruits. Hence it appears that these *interior trials* are of great benefit to the soul, and that they are one of the most powerful means in the spiritual life for causing it to reach a pitch of solid holiness and close union with God, provided that the soul be careful to bear its trials with patience, humility, and love, in union with Jesus Christ, and more especially in union with the trials and interior sufferings of His Sacred Heart.

Let us not fail to add that, if to these dispositions be joined an apostolic motive of action,—that is to say, if these interior trials be endured for the salvation of souls,—then access with confidence to God will be obtained, and a greater measure be secured of the precious graces of salvation and perfection for others than could be gained in any other way. God is generally pleased to grant to saintly souls which undergo these tribulations, peculiar interior graces for other souls which He designs to lead on to perfection. In a word, we believe that those persons who are most fitted to exercise the *apostleship of suffering* with profit, are those whom God sees fit to draw into closer resemblance to His beloved Son by leading them along the path of *interior trials*; and still more so if these trials are so intense and so long continued, as to become a species of agony. This occurs in the case of many souls on whom God the Father is pleased to confer some special features



of resemblance to His agonizing Son. We shall speak further of this particular condition in one of the following Chapters, as the consideration of it may be of great utility in promoting the salvation and perfection of souls. But it will assist our comprehension of the subject, if we speak in the first place of the agonies which were endured by the holy Soul of Jesus.

## CHAPTER XV.

Of the Agonies endured by the Holy Soul of Jesus.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, during the thirty-three years of His mortal life, was continually in the state of a Victim. His holy Soul, being the principal subject of this immolation, was a soul ever suffering, constantly given up to desolation, always more or less enduring agony.

The great love borne by Him to His Father caused Him to desire most ardently to prove His love by the greatest sacrifices. And as nothing could restrain this desire of His Heart, He satisfied it to the full by sinking it into complete *desolation*, being overwhelmed with shame—*saturatus opprobriis*—plunging into the flood of that bloody baptism with which He desired so ardently to be baptized, when He exclaimed, *Baptismo habeo baptizari; et quo modo coarctor usquedum perficiatur*—“*I have a baptism wherewith to be baptized; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished.*”

Surrounded as we now are by the chill atmosphere of this age, we are almost unable to comprehend these holy excesses of the love of our God. Yet the truth remains; and for this reason we do not think ourselves too bold in asserting that Jesus underwent not only the Agony in the Garden of Olives, but also what we may venture to call the *continual*

*agony* of His whole mortal life. We do not presume to say that the holy Soul of Jesus was given up during the whole course of His life to such desolation as he endured in the Garden of Olives. But we mean that this desolation was habitually, or almost habitually, so intense and so profound as to merit the title of a kind of prolonged *agony*, having its final and *intensest* crisis in that which He endured in Gethsemani and on Calvary.

We may find some very remarkable pages on this affecting subject in a book recently published under episcopal approbation,<sup>1</sup> in which a holy Religious relates with all simplicity the words which she heard uttered by the mouth of our Blessed Lord Himself. The elevation and precision of language in which this humble child of the people, a simple Lay Sister, explains the most sublime dogmas of our holy religion, leave us in no doubt whatever as to the truth of her affirmations on the subject which we have selected from her writings.

“On the evening of Holy Thursday,” says this faithful handmaid of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, “I knelt down to offer up my prayers to God, but I was unable to pray.

“My mind was filled with the recollection of the Passion of my Saviour. I felt, as it were, an irresistible attraction to follow Jesus and to pray

<sup>1</sup> Life and Works of *Marie Lataste*, approved by the Bishop of Aire (in the English series of Mr. Healy Thompson).

with Him before His Passion. I beheld Him separated from His Apostles, gone aside from them a little way, and prostrate with His face to the ground ; and I heard Him cry : ‘ My God, let this Chalice pass from Me : nevertheless let Thy will, not Mine, be done.’ I drew near to Jesus to wipe away the sweat which poured abundantly from His forehead ; and He said : ‘ You come to Me, My child, when all others have forsaken Me. I thank you for it.’ ‘ Lord,’ I replied, ‘ how much Thou sufferest.’ ‘ My child, you are unable to comprehend it. I feel at this instant all the sufferings of My Passion : and those pious Christians who keep My sufferings at this time in remembrance, pay Me honor and veneration for what they call the Agony of the Garden.

“ ‘ The Son of Man, My child, endured several agonies. Do you know, in fact, what an agony is ? Agony is the strong sinking away of life and the resistance of a living being to the approaching power of death. You will now be able to see that I have endured not one, but many agonies.

“ ‘ The first took place at the very moment of My conception ; the second, in My mother’s womb ; the third, on the day of My birth ; the fourth, in the Garden of Olives ; and the fifth, upon the Cross.

“ ‘ My first agony took place at the moment of My conception. Before that time, I possessed the Divine life only. I was the Son of God, the Eternal Word. But I had caused My voice to be heard, say-

ing to the Father: "Behold, I come!" And I then came to God My Father, not only by the return of My Divine Person to Himself, in His bosom, but by the abasement of My Divinity, of My Divine life, which I enclosed in the Humanity that I took in the womb of My mother Mary. This was an abasement which your mind can never comprehend. There was a strife between My Divine life and that human life which I was about to assume; this was the true agony of My Divine life; for, My daughter, humiliation such as this was an agony indeed. It could not rob Me of My Divinity, but it was enough to crush and overwhelm My Humanity, had not My Divine power inspired it with strength to receive and unite itself to My Divinity.

"My second agony took place in My mother's womb. In the eternal bosom of My heavenly Father I was surrounded with His glory. I was the eternal reflection of that glory. I was God in God, God distinct from God and God united to God, God eternally proceeding from God, and God dwelling eternally in God. But in the womb of Mary I was compelled to abase, to veil, and almost to annihilate My eternal glory. I possessed in God a life glorious and divine; in Mary I possessed a life obscure, unknown, capable of pain. My glory as God cannot either disappear or suffer annihilation: My Divine life cannot be taken from Me, for I should cease to exist. But to unite this Divine life with the human

life and to preserve it in this union, is to abase and annihilate it as far as this is possible. It is to place it in a state of perpetual agony until the hour when My Humanity shall dwell full of glory in the bosom of the Divinity.

“ ‘ These two agonies were not true agonies, because they concerned especially and in the first place My Divinity. I have revealed them to you in order that you may dwell upon them sometimes in spirit and, beholding the humiliation and abasement of My Divinity, you may learn to abase and humiliate yourself.

“ ‘ My third agony commenced on the day of My birth. My life was, in fact, to be an expiation, a continued course of suffering, ending only in My death. My whole life was passed in suffering, and daily did My sufferings bring Me nearer to death. I was born in poverty. Eight days after my birth I shed My blood for the first time ; forty days afterward I offered Myself as Victim ; and soon after I was compelled to fly from the wrath of an earthly sovereign. I labored after this with Mary and Joseph in our abode at Nazareth. I fasted forty days in the desert. For the space of three years I wearied Myself in preaching the Gospel to the poor, healing the sick, instructing My Apostles ; and all this for the purpose of hastening My death upon the Tree of the Cross.

“ ‘ I lived thirty-three years like a Victim pre-



pared for death, expecting death, even desiring death for the salvation of mankind.

“ ‘The state in which you behold Me at this hour is My fourth agony. My Divinity gives Me a clear view of all the torments of My Passion, of all the crimes of men which I am to expiate, of the expiation which will be useless to immense numbers, because they will refuse to profit by it; and the sight of all these things would deprive Me of life, but that I keep it in order to endure, in their full reality, those sufferings which are required of Me by the justice of My Father.

“ ‘And the fifth and last agony, My child, is the agony of the Cross. The cruelty of men had exhausted itself upon Me. They had nailed Me to the Cross; they had given Me vinegar and gall to drink. My veins had poured forth their blood almost to the last drop. The prophecies were all accomplished. I cried with a loud voice, and commended My Spirit into the hands of My Father.’ ”

It will be unnecessary, after this extract, to insist further upon the sorrows, the *continued agonies*, endured by the holy Soul of Jesus during the thirty-three years of His mortal life. As our Blessed Lord Himself suffered continually, it is not wonderful that He should summon certain souls to follow Him as closely as possible in that sorrowful way of tribulation, of *continued agonies*. And the more completely the lives of these privileged persons are filled

with anguish and bitterness, the more abundantly are they enriched with precious gifts and abundant graces. God generally makes use of them for the fulfilment of the holiest and most important missions, with regard to the general economy of redemption, to the general good of the Church, to the salvation and perfection of souls on a most extensive scale.

Finally, if they are faithful to the end in their mission, then will these souls, beloved of God and of Jesus Christ His Divine Son, occupy places of honor in Heaven and shine with glory unspeakable. But their great felicity will consist in that heavenly sweetness which will eternally replace in their souls the bitterness of sorrow which was their continual portion upon earth.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Of the Agonies endured by certain Souls whom Jesus Christ associates more particularly with His Life of Agony and Crucifixion.

The subject which we propose to discuss in the present Chapter is applicable to certain fervent souls who are associated by our Lord in a special manner with those interior agonies to which His holy Soul was delivered up during the course of His mortal life, and more especially in the Garden of Olives and on the Cross. This state of agony of the soul, is, in fact, an exceptional state in the spiritual life, and should be regarded as the effect of God's particular permission.

It may be even said that these conditions of extraordinary internal suffering correspond to those extraordinary conditions of divine love and of divine union, which are assigned by the masters of the spiritual life as so many high degrees of perfection. In fact, perfection consists in union with God by charity; and perfection is greater in proportion as this union is closer and more perfect. The author of the "Imitation" observes, that God visits, or unites Himself to the soul, in two ways—namely, by consolation and by desolation. In the first case, the soul is full of joy, and thrills with conscious happiness. The love for God is then a *love of consolation*;

and the union which proceeds from it is consequently a *union of consolation* also. But in the second case,—that is to say, when God visits the soul by *desolation*,—the soul is sorrowful, and suffers under the impression of the trial, patiently accepted, but still most deeply felt. Its love to God is then most real, but it is a *love of desolation*, and the union which results from it is also consequently a very real union, but a *union of desolation*.

We do not say that this union is not at bottom a happy one, although it is founded in *desolation*; but happiness is then felt only in an unalterable disposition of patience and peaceful endurance, which retain the balance of the soul amidst the storms which agitate it. So in a vessel, hurried on by a powerful wind, the sails and rigging are in the greatest commotion, whilst the hull is almost unmoved. In this manner also did the holy Soul of our Blessed Saviour, that perfect example of the tried and suffering Christian, enjoy the blessedness of the intuitive vision and the beatific union, whilst the inferior part of His Soul was overwhelmed with the most intense desolation, bitter grief, and feelings of mortal agony.

As, then, the consolation which results from the exercise of what we call the *union of consolation*, is sweet and comforting in proportion to the intimacy and perfection of that union, so in the exercise of what we call the *union of desolation* the intimacy and

perfection of the union proportionably increases the bitterness and afflictions of the desolation. The reason of this is very evident. In the first case Jesus Christ unites the soul to His joys; in the second, to His sorrows. In the first case, Jesus manifests Himself to the soul as the fountain of all consolation; in the second, as an abyss of desolation—as a Man of Sorrows—in a word, as a Victim. In the first condition, every feeling of sadness disappears from the soul; it is completely absorbed in the joy of drawing the divine life from the fountains of the Saviour: *Haurietis aquas in gaudio de fontibus Salvatoris*. In the second, although the soul is fundamentally at peace, because it is united to God, yet, as it is particularly with the sorrows of the holy Victim of Calvary that this union is effected, the soul is completely given over to desolation, and plunged in the bitterest grief, as was Jesus in His Agony.

If you inquire which of these two states of mind is better in practice, our reply is easily made. Of all the states in which the members of Jesus Christ can be placed in the course of their spiritual life, the most desirable is that which communicates to the soul the most perfect resemblance to its Divine Head while He was on earth. Now, we have already observed that the life of Jesus Christ upon earth was a life of continual suffering, almost a perpetual agony. He therefore resembles Jesus Christ the

most closely, who is most intimately associated with Him in His continual sufferings and agony, by the most perfect love. And here, again, you pause, and ask: "Are there then such souls to be found to whom our Lord allots this state of perpetual agony?" If you understand the word agony in its most extensive meaning of suffering and desolation, we must answer, "No, our Lord does not permit any soul to endure this state of desolation perpetually; but He does permit some souls to endure this state at intervals of greater or less duration, although He does not suffer them to be habitually reduced to an extremity of grief. And not only so, but He causes them to be constantly under the weight of some interior Cross more or less hard to bear.

Examples of this are to be found continually; and when a director of consciences meets with one of these souls who are thus marked out for immolation by our Lord, he may say without any fear of self-deception: "I see before me a person who is most tenderly loved by my Blessed Lord, in whom He has resolved to reproduce a living image of Himself, of His life of crucifixion. I will bestow my utmost care and attention upon this soul, that it may respond abundantly to the designs of God regarding it, and that the souls of others who may be destined to attain salvation and perfection by the means of this chosen soul may not be deprived of its powerful assistance." For God never places any soul in this



most blessed state for its own good alone, and the words of St. Teresa on this subject are perfectly applicable to such a case:

“I am persuaded that the person who strives to attain to the height of perfection (and the state of which we have been speaking is the shortest way of reaching it), will not go alone to Heaven ; but God will provide him as a brave captain with many followers who will march to heaven under his escort.”

Consider yourselves most happy then, O favored souls, whom God the Father is pleased to bring into such close resemblance to His agonizing Son. Bless the Lord for His unspeakable favor which is greater than any other gift of our Lord to His best friends. Suffer not yourselves to be discouraged ; let not a thought enter your hearts in words like these : “The Cross is too heavy for me ; I can bear it no longer.” Such language as this is not inspired by God, but by your enemy the devil, who is jealous of the favor which you enjoy ; or by your human nature, which is ready to sink from a wretched feeling of weariness and exhaustion. Have recourse at these times to Him Who laid this Cross upon you : say to Him : O my sweet Jesus, I do not refuse Thy Cross. I do not reject the share in Thy bitter Chalice which Thou dost offer me. But Lord, Thou knowest my weakness ; aid me, sustain me, strengthen me, that I may not sink under the weight of my

Cross, but may bear it after Thee with perseverance and courage even to the summit of Mount Calvary, there to be crucified and to die with Thee for the good of those souls for whose salvation Thou didst shed all Thy precious Blood. *Amen.*

## CHAPTER XVII.

The intimate Communion which subsists between the Apostleship of Prayer and the Apostleship of Suffering.

We observed, in the very commencement of this little work, and we must here repeat it again: Between the Apostleship of Prayer and the apostleship of suffering there exists a close tie, a most intimate connection—so intimate, indeed, that it may well be asked how it can be possible to separate them from each other, if we expect to gain really important and solid results for the salvation of souls and the regeneration of the world. We are firmly convinced that the apostleship of prayer and the apostleship of suffering must ever walk hand in hand, just as suffering and prayer were ever most closely united in the life of the Son of God. Of what value, indeed, are the prayers and sufferings of Christians, the members of Jesus Christ, unless they are a continuation and prolongation of the prayers and sufferings of Jesus, our Divine Head? Now our Blessed Lord prayed and suffered continually; and His prayers and sufferings were continually directed to the fulfilment of the mission which He was to accomplish upon earth, even the salvation of the human race.

It is, then, in the Person of Jesus Christ praying and suffering for the salvation of souls, that every

Christian who desires to co-operate in that great work by his own prayers and sufferings must seek for his strength and his example. The more closely he can approach the divine example—that is, the more inseparably he unites prayer and suffering in his own person as Christ united them—the more perfectly will he fulfil his apostleship and the more souls will he gain to Jesus Christ.

This enables us to understand why those men who led the most apostolic lives, who brought about the most extensive results in their labors for the conversion of the nations, were all men most eminent for the spirit of prayer and of self-sacrifice. St. Paul, St. Bernard, St. Francis Xavier, St. Teresa, all possessed this twofold spirit in an eminent degree, besides many others whom we have not mentioned. Suffering and prayer have communicated such marvellous fecundity to all the labors undertaken by them for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

We may even go farther than this, in order to explain more fully the relative importance of the apostleship of suffering. In the great work of our redemption it was placed by the Saviour of the world in the foremost rank of importance and usefulness. Although it is true that our Lord Jesus Christ could have effected the salvation of the human race by the very least of His prayers, yet it is no less true that it was by His death and Passion that He did actually, and as it were officially, accomplish that great work ;

so that—as theologians affirm, in their explanations of the teaching of St. Paul—it was the Blood of Jesus Christ, shed upon the Cross, that was the immediate cause of the redemption of mankind. The words of the great Apostle are as follow. *Sine sanguinis effusione non fit remissio*—“Without shedding of blood there is no remission.” (Hebrews, x.). And elsewhere, in a still more explicit manner: *In quo habemus redemptionem per sanguinem ejus, remissionem peccatorum*—“In Whom we have redemption through His blood, remission of sins.” (Colossians, i.).

For the same reason St. Paul in another place announces, in a manner most solemn and impressive, this mystery of God: *Christum oportuit pati*—“Christ must needs have suffered.” (Acts, xvii.) He intended to show us that our salvation was made to depend upon the Passion and Death of the Son of God; that God the Father, being justly irritated against us, imposed this as the price of our deliverance from the slavery of sin and from the tyranny of the devil: *Christum oportuit pati*. He does not say that it was necessary that Christ should do this or that thing during His mortal life, but that *He should suffer*.

Christ is our High Priest, and one of the principal functions of the High Priest consists in interceding—that is, in praying for the people. And Jesus Christ is also our Prophet and Teacher. He gives Himself this title on several occasions in the

Gospels ; and St. Paul declares that it is from Him that we have received the truth, and that to His supreme authority, as Teacher and Master, we must apply to hear the words of truth. *Apparuit enim gratia Dei Salvatoris nostri omnibus hominibus erudiens nos.* (Titus, ii.). Why, then, does St. Paul content himself with saying, *Christum oportuit pati?* “*Christ must needs have suffered.*” This is the reason. While fully acknowledging that the prayers and teaching of the Son of God acted in co-operation with His sufferings in the work of our salvation, He well knew that it was the will of God the Father, in His justice and love, that our salvation should depend, as to its immediate cause, on the Blood of His Son, shed for us upon Calvary—on His Sufferings, His Passion, and His Death.

O fervent and devout Christians, who are ready to suffer anything to win souls to Christ, never forget these words of St. Paul, so short, but so pregnant with divine meaning: *Christum oportuit pati*—“*It was needful that Christ should suffer ;*” as if St. Paul wished to say : It was not enough that Christ should be willing to redeem mankind by praying for them and instructing them ; it was furthermore necessary, and above all, that He should *suffer and die* for them. This was the price of our redemption ; and on this condition the eternal decree of God the Father made to depend the salvation of the whole world.



*Oportuit.* It was necessary. And how can you then be permitted to assist in this great work unless you are willing to suffer in your turn? It was necessary that Christ should, not *pray* only, but *suffer* also, to gain souls to God; and do you hope to gain them without suffering? It is doubtless true that when you are praying for the salvation of your brethren, Jesus Christ unites the virtue of His own sufferings to your prayers, and thus renders them fruitful. But forget not that neither in the application to mankind of the merits of the Redeemer, nor in the plan of redemption itself, has God two different ways of proceeding.

It was His will that we should be redeemed by the Cross of Christ; and it is by means of the Cross that He proceeds to make to each particular soul the application of the merits of the sufferings of Christ for its salvation. And therefore the Apostle Paul, to whom the great mission of explaining to men that sublime doctrine of salvation by the Cross of Christ was especially confided, concludes his instruction in these words: *Adimpleo ea quae desunt passionum Christi in carne mea*—"I fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ in my body." He means to say to us: It is not enough that my Saviour has suffered for me: it is necessary, in order to participate in the redeeming virtue of His blood, that I should formally apply it to myself by suffering with Him. And did not our Blessed

Lord Himself inculcate the same truth long before the time of His Apostle in these well-known words, which leave those without excuse who expect to attain Heaven without suffering: *Si quis vult post Me venire, abneget semetipsum, tollat crucem suam, et sequatur Me?* “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”

From the preceding reflections we may conclude—first, that the apostleship of prayer should not be generally separated in practice from the apostleship of suffering.

Secondly. The apostleship of prayer, how extensive soever its field of action may be, however extensive its results, will only attain to the realization of a part of its aim, especially in what relates to the religious regeneration of modern society, if it be not carefully and closely united to the apostleship of suffering.

Thirdly. The addition of *sacrifice*, of *self-immolation*,—in a word, of the *apostleship of suffering*,—is one of the most indispensable conditions of life and fruitfulness for the apostleship of prayer.

Fourthly. In consequence of these facts, the apostleship of suffering ought not to be regarded as a subordinate element, or even as a complement merely, of the apostleship of prayer; but rather as a vital element which will increase a hundredfold its own life and consequently augment its action.

Under this, as well as under every other aspect, the prayers and sufferings of Christians, members of Jesus Christ, ought to resemble the prayers and sufferings of Jesus, our Divine Head. Now although the prayers and all other works of Jesus Christ were, by their own unassisted power, capable of meriting our salvation, yet all were referred, and as it were subordinated, by Him to His one last Sacrifice upon the Cross,—that is, to His Passion and Death, which according to God's decree was to be the final act of expiation, reparation, and redemption of the human race: in other words, the redemption itself.

Springing direct from the Heart of Jesus as a flower from its parent stem, the *Apostleship of Prayer* has already done much good in the world. We doubt not, rather we are most fully convinced, that these good and beneficial results will be multiplied a hundredfold since, in the daily offering of this holy League of the Sacred Heart, the *apostleship of suffering*, springing in like manner from the Agony of the Sacred Heart, is united to the Apostleship of Prayer, vivifying it with divine influences and forming of both *one sole and identical Apostleship*.

By sufferings, let us repeat it for the last time, we understand all our pains, labors, sickness, infirmities; our tribulations of all kinds, our trials of mind and body, reverses of fortune, voluntary mortifications; and, above all, the *daily offering of our life* for the salvation of souls; and further,—if God

inspires us with the desire to make the petition,—the *request to suffer* for this apostolic end, which has been made by so many generous disciples of Jesus Christ. They thus placed themselves in the condition of victims prepared to endure all things, even death itself, for the greater glory of God, the more certain triumph of the Church, the extension of the kingdom of Jesus Christ and the salvation of souls.

It is not then without reason that the Apostleship of Prayer puts *every morning* on the lips and, what is better, into the heart of its numberless Associates its beautiful Morning Offering which is at once a daily prayer and offering and consecration.

*O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer Thee, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, all the prayers, works, and SUFFERINGS of this day for all the intentions of Thy Divine Heart. Amen.*

#### FATHER LYONNARD'S PRAYER.

*O most merciful Jesus, Lover of souls, I pray Thee, by the agony of Thy most Sacred Heart, and by the sorrows of Thy Immaculate Mother, cleanse in Thy Blood the sinners of the whole world, who are now in their agony, and who are to die on this day.*

*Heart of Jesus, once in agony, have mercy on the dying.*

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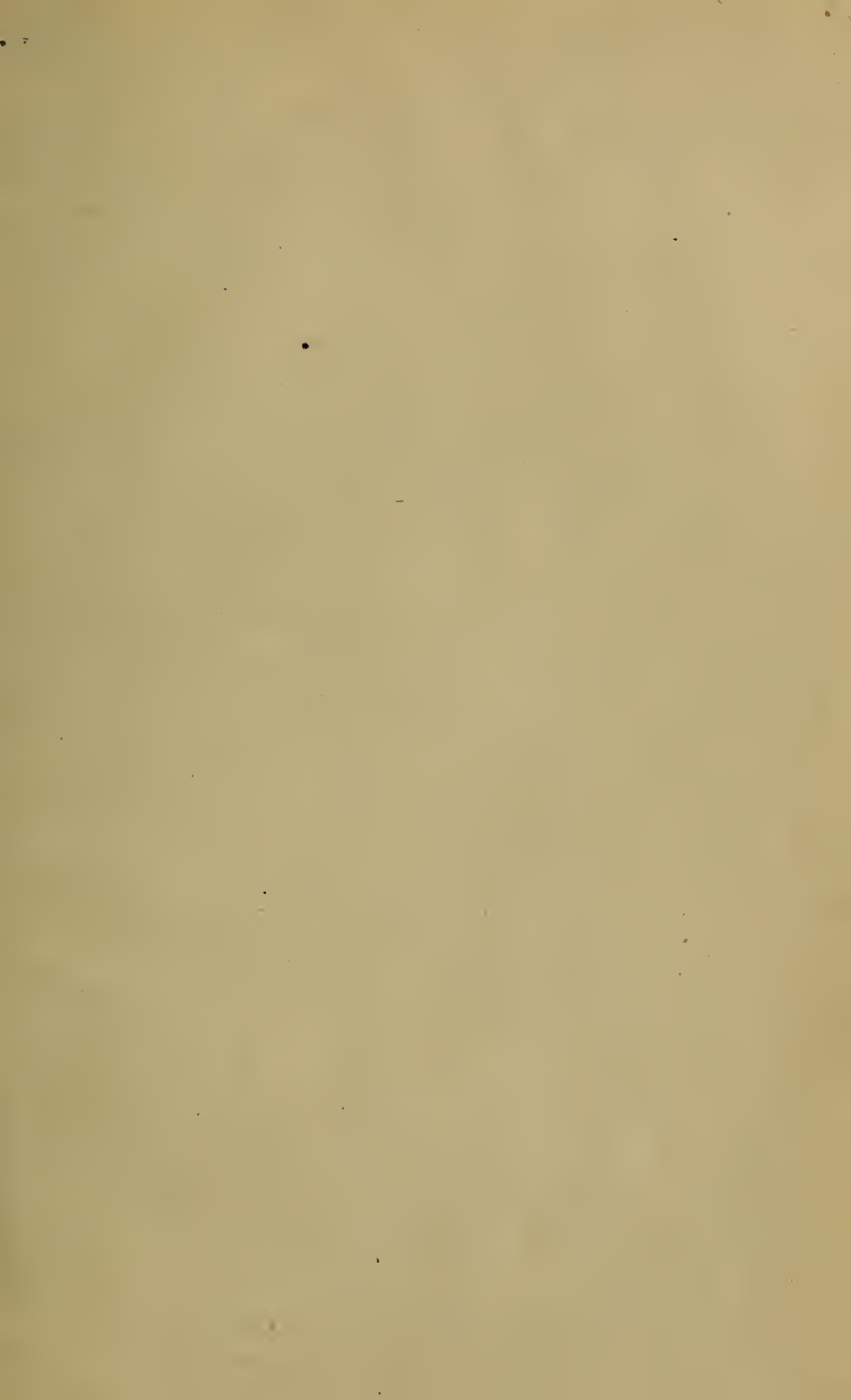
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